THE UK'S **ONLY** MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR WORKING & ASPIRING PROS

# PROFESSIONAL PHOTO

PROFESSIONALPHOTO.ONLINE

ISSUE 189 £3.99

DIGITAL+ ONLY £3.99 +EXTRA CONTENT VIDEO LINKS

BUYERS' GUIDE

## LOCATION LIGHTING

Rounding up the latest launches

SHOOTING SPEED

## CAPTURING AUTO ACTION

Pro techniques for dynamic results

ASTRO PHOTOGRAPHY

## OUR PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE

Josh Dury on his battle to preserve our dark skies

WEDDING CAMERAS

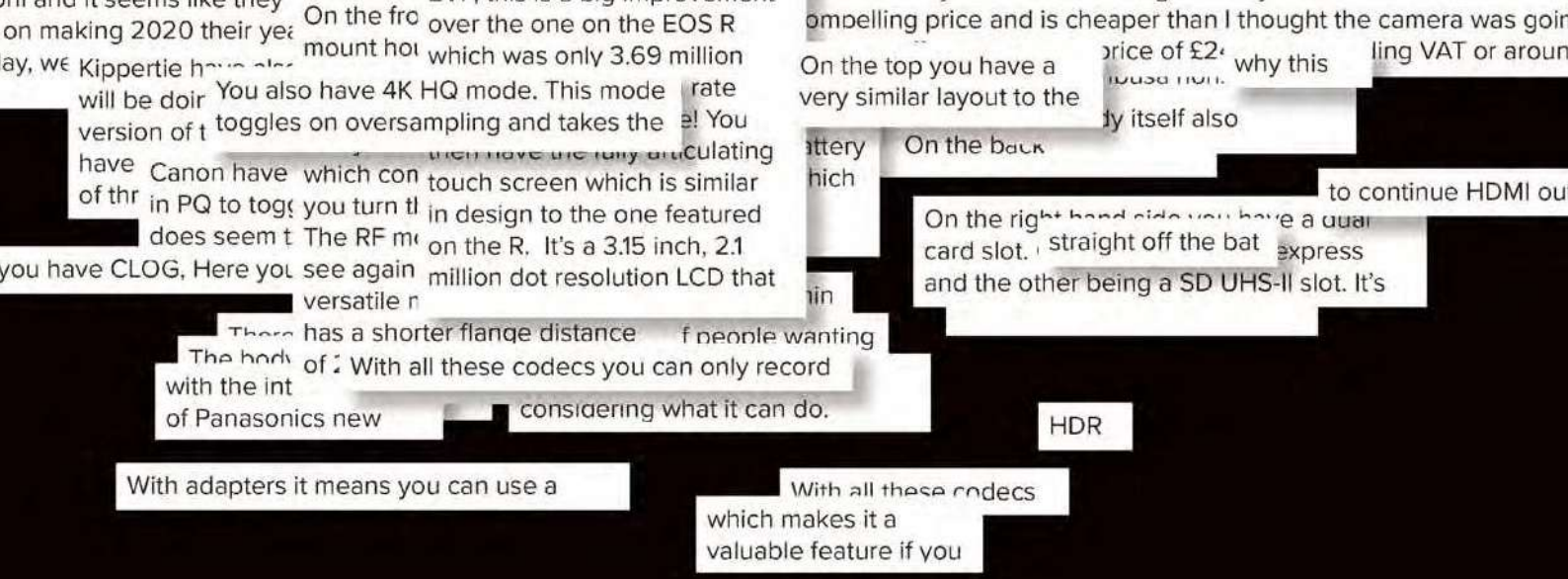
## CAN BIGGER BE BETTER?

Medium format makes a return

# Caring for the Environment

How photographers can create a greener business

VISIT…


on making 2020 their yea
ay, we Kippertie h
will be doir
version of t
have
of thr
you have CLOG, Here you
On the fro
mount hou
You also have 4K HQ mode. This mode
toggles on oversampling and takes the
Canon have
in PQ to togg
does seem t
see again
versatile r
has a shorter flange distance
of
with the int
of Panasonics new
over the one on the EOS R
which was only 3.69 million
rate
e! You
touch screen which is similar
in design to the one featured
on the R. It's a 3.15 inch, 2.1
million dot resolution LCD that
With all these codecs you can only record
considering what it can do.
ompelling price and is cheaper than I thought the camera was goin
On the top you have a
very similar layout to the
why this
ling VAT or aroun
On the back
to continue HDMI ou
On the right hand side you have a dual
card slot.
straight off the bat
express
and the other being a SD UHS-II slot. It's
HDR
With adapters it means you can use a
With all these codecs
which makes it a
valuable feature if you

# We have a lot to say, so we made a video...

/cvptv

Your trusted resource for the industry's new and leading technology; from product reviews, tests and opinions, to creative shorts, on set behind the scenes and advice.

CVP

# Welcome

IT FELT ENTIRELY appropriate in this, our latest digital issue, to have a focus on green issues, as we all start to look closer at the effect we're having on the planet we share. With COP26 throwing a spotlight on it all right now, we've got a major feature in this issue looking at how professional photographers can focus on their own footprint and, as a result, make their services more attractive to discerning clients.

Along the same lines we're featuring astro photographer Josh Dury in this month's Portfolio feature and he's seen first hand how light pollution is destroying our dark skies and making it impossible to appreciate the awesome night sky that surrounds us. His way of drawing attention to the issue is to shoot remarkable nightscapes, where an iconic location, such as Durdle Door, is seen in the context of the universe beyond, and you can admire the beauty in his shots while appreciating what's being lost.

Elsewhere in this issue we're looking at the latest generation of location lights, both LEDs and flash, and marvelling at how light, efficient and totally transportable they are these days, while Richard Bradbury concludes his look at automotive photography by focusing on capturing great shots of cars in motion.

We've also got Matty Graham recalling times he's had to consider whether a job is worth putting personal safety at risk, while Lisa Devlin has discovered medium format might well be a great choice for wedding photographers again. Another great line up of stories and enjoy reading!

**TERRY HOPE**
EDITOR

THE UK'S ONLY MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR WORKING & ASPIRING PROS
PROFESSIONAL
PHOTO
DIGITAL+
ONLY £3.99
+EXTRA CONTENT
ON-PAGE VIDEO
LOCATION LIGHTING
Rounding up the latest launches
CAPTURING AUTOACTION
Pro techniques for dynamic results
OUR PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE
Josh Dury on his battle to preserve our dark skies
CAN BIGGER BE BETTER?
Medium format makes a return
Caring for the Environment
How photographers can create a greener business
TRAPPED INSIDE PORTRAITS FROM WHEN LONDON LOCKED DOWN

**ON THE COVER**

A stunning view at twilight looking over Llanddwyn Bay in Anglesey, with the Milky Way in the background. Shot by astro photographer Josh Dury, you can read more about his campaign to preserve our dark skies in Portfolio, starting on Page 10.

Defending the Dark
Astro photographer Josh Dury considers the night sky to be an open window to the universe and he's fighting the threat of light pollution to ensure that this classic view isn't lost to future generations.
JOSH DURY | PORTFOLIO

**Page 10**

Stand Up for the Planet
The state of the planet we all inhabit is in the spotlight right now and photographers can look to reduce their own carbon footprint and potentially benefit their businesses at the same time.
GOING GREENER | BUSINESS
Making Changes

**Page 52**

Spotlight on Location Lighting
If you're a professional working on location it's reassuring to have a set of lights that are designed from the ground up to do the job. Here's a round-up of four exciting new launches
SHOWCASE
Lowel Blender XL LED Light

**Page 71**

PROFESSIONAL PHOTO

**EDITORIAL**
**Publisher and Editor:** Terry Hope
terry@professionalphoto.online

**Contributing Editor:** Matty Graham
matty@professionalphoto.online

**Contributing Editor:** Richard Bradbury
richard@professionalphoto.online

**ADVERTISING**
**Sales:** Helen Coston
sales@professionalphoto.online

**DESIGN**
**Art Editor:** Tania Croft

**WEBSITE**
**Webmaster:** Dane Pestano
dane@professionalphoto.online

**SUBSCRIPTION AND BACK ISSUES**
**Email:** subs@professionalphoto.online
**Online:** https://professionalphoto.online/magazine-subscription

**NEWSSTAND DISTRIBUTION**
Intermedia Solutions Ltd., Unit 6, The Enterprise Centre, Kelvin Lane, Manor Royal, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 9PE. www.inter-media.co.uk

**PRINTED IN THE UK BY LAVENHAM PRESS**
www.lavenhampress.com

SMART MEDIA

Professional Photo is published 12 times a year by So Smart Media, West Cottage, Brasted Place, Brasted, Kent TN16 1JE. No part of this magazine can be used without prior written permission of So Smart Media Ltd. Professional Photo is a registered trademark of So Smart Media Ltd. The advertisements published in Professional Photo that have been written, designed or produced by employees of So Smart Media Ltd may not be reproduced without the written consent of the publisher. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher. While So Smart Media makes every effort to ensure accuracy, it can't be guaranteed. Street pricing at the time of writing is quoted for products.

# Contents

Issue 189


**7 ProNews**
Samyang unveils its first ever zoom and Morally Toxic camera bags take a bow.

**10 Portfolio**
Josh Dury speaks up in support of the dark side as he shows why light pollution is the scourge of the astro photographer.

**18 Project**
We find out more about Julia Fullerton-Batten's epic lockdown project.

## PRO TALK

**24 The World According to Dench**
Assignments with the potential to end in disaster occupy Dench this month.

**26 Matty's Graham's Pro File**
A shoot in the Faroe Isles where Matty had to make a call on his personal safety and how far he'd go to get the shot.

## TECHNIQUE

**28 Anatomy of a Shoot**
Paul tells us about a shot of a little boy that had great potential but needed to be finished in post-production.

**32 Automotive Exploits**
Finishing off his two-parter, Richard is looking at ways to shoot high action studies of cars without taking risks.

**38 Affinity Workshop**
How to create portraits full of atmosphere by combining selected shots of texture in post-production.

**42 The Move Towards Motion – All About Matte Boxes**
The matte box is the accessory everyone associates with filmmakers but why is it such an indispensable piece of kit?

**46 Solid and Super Smooth**
Rick Bronks is testing out the Manfrotto 645 tripod and Nitrotech 612 Fluid Head to what the combo has to offer.

## SOFTWARE

**36 DxO's Latest Upgrades**
Our software expert Amy-Leigh Atkins is taking a learned look at DxO's latest PhotoLab 5 and FilmPack 6 launches.

## BUSINESS

**48 Lisa Devlin**
Lisa has been working with medium format and is loving the experience!

**50 Standing Together**
A focus on Nikon's Green Credentials and involvement in the COP26 Convention.

**52 Respect for the Planet**
Professional photographers can do their bit when it comes to the environment and we show how to green your business.

**56 Saved for a Second Chance**
How MPB shook up the used kit market and helped save waste in the process.

**58 Pro Academy – Pet Photos**
Our latest challenge is pet photography of all kinds, with tips on how to shoot better pictures from a Nikon expert.

**62 Pro Academy - Editor's Choice**
We're presenting a selection of some of the very best Pro Academy entries.

**66 Time to Turn Pro**
If you've got some happy customers then get them to write you a testimonial!

## GEAR

**68 Trading Up: Move to Full Frame**
Full frame cameras are still very much at the top of the pile, so what are your options for trading up to this format?

**71 Location Lighting Round-Up**
We're taking a look at some of the latest launches on the portable lighting front and testing out a Quad Kit from Rosco.

**78 Tested: Atomos Ninja V+**
The latest upgrade on the ever-popular Ninja V sees it gear up for 8K video.

**81 Test: SmallRig Mini Matte Box**
This clever Matte Box will do a great job and comes in priced below £100.

## PRO TALK

**82 Things I Wish I'd Known**
Wedding specialist Shelly Mantovani tells herself why it's so important not to listen.

# Time for us all to do our bit to make a big difference

THIS IS THE second green special issue we've produced, the first one being shortly after I took over the magazine in 2019 and had made the call to ditch the plastic bags for subscribers and to switch to greener FSC paper stock using vegetable-based inks.

In the scheme of things it was a drop in the ocean of course, but we could hardly discuss how professional photographers could make their businesses more sustainable if we were obviously not trying to do the very same thing ourselves. And the point is that if everyone does make even what are initially small changes to the way they operate, then collectively it can count for a lot.

I would never lecture anyone about how they should get things done, but we've caught up with photographers this month who are demonstrating the all-round benefits of a greener approach. For a start you'll feel better for actively engaging with a subject that's going to be dominating our lives for the foreseeable future. There's also the point that it doesn't need to cost you very much, and can indeed even save you money if you're cutting down on waste.

While your motivation should always be from the heart rather than the wallet, there's also the point that it doesn't hurt to share what your outlook is. A lot of us are currently looking closer at who we partner with and what their ethics might be, and if your business is clearly making an effort then people will be attracted to that.

> **"If your business is clearly making an effort to be greener then customers are always going to be attracted to that."**

It might also make rivals think harder about their own approach if they're losing business to you. Small steps maybe, but collectively they all make a difference.

**Terry Hope – Editor**

**Our precious Earth as seen from the Moon: Image copyright NASA**

# AFFINITY Photo

## The fastest, smoothest, most powerful professional photo editor for macOS, Windows and iPad

Affinity Photo redefines the boundaries for professional photo editing software. With a meticulous focus on workflow it offers sophisticated tools for enhancing, editing and retouching your images in an incredibly intuitive interface with all the power and performance you need.

Experience the new way to edit photos with a **10 day free trial: affinity.serif.com/photo**

APPLE DESIGN AWARD WINNERS

Editors' Choice ★★★★★ worldwide customer rating

# PRONEWS



LAUNCH

## SAMYANG PRESENTS ITS FIRST ZOOM

SAMYANG IS CELEBRATING the 50th year since its foundation and is marking the occasion with its first ever zoom model, the AF 24-70mm f/2.8 FE, which is designed for E mount APS-C and full frame mirrorless cameras.

Perhaps not surprisingly, given that the company is as celebrated for its cinema lenses as it is for optics produced for still photographers, the new zoom is designed to be the ultimate hybrid product. Key features are its fast f/2.8 aperture throughout the entire zoom range and its optical design of 17 elements in 14 groups to deliver excellent sharpness and contrast in all areas of the image.

Excellent bokeh is said to be delivered thanks to the 9-blade diaphragm that's employed, while Samyang's Linear STM (Stepping Motor) delivers quiet and accurate AF. The lens can also focus down to just 35cm for close-up work, while weather sealing ensures that it will carry on performing even if a photographer is working in light rain, snow and dust.

For those shooting video the key features are the fact that it's par-focal,

Tap here to watch a presentational video about the new Samyang 24-70mm

so focus is maintained on the subject during zooming, while the torque of the focus ring is matched closely to that of a dedicated manual focus lens when the user is shooting video in manual mode. There will also be a separate cine kit available to accompany the lens, consisting of focus gearing, a follow focus and tripod mount.

Exclusively distributed in the UK by Holdan, the lens is expected to be available from this month and will retail for £828.

**holdan.co.uk/brand/Samyang**

LAUNCH

## DO IT ALL LENS FROM NIKON

THE LATEST LENS from Nikon to join its Z-Series crop sensor line-up is the Nikkor Z DX 18-140mm f/3.5-6.3 VR, covering everything from wide angle through to standard and telephoto focal lengths in a single optic.

Touted by Nikon as an ideal lens for those that love to travel, the new 7x zoom weighs in at just 315g and yet still comes with an impressive line-up of features on board, such as a built-in vibration reduction system that's said to enable up to five stops of stabilisation. Meanwhile autofocus is said to be fast and particularly attuned to working in tandem with the Z camera's Eye-Detection AF. The lens also includes effective sealing against dust and water drops, meaning it can be used in a variety of challenging environments.

The new lens is shipping around now and will retail at £599.

**nikon.co.uk**

Tap here for more information

IMAGE © Stefano Unterthiner

COMPETITION

## WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR OPENS FOR ENTRIES

ONE OF THE MOST prestigious competitions for wildlife photographers on the planet, the Natural History Museum's acclaimed Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition, has opened for entries from photographers of all ages, nationalities and levels. Now in its fifty-eighth year, the event provides a global showcase for nature photographers and environmental photojournalists and it's judged, as always, by a prestigious international jury.

The previous competition achieved over 50,000 entries from 95 countries, attracted by a selection of categories that are designed to appeal to a wide range of interests and approaches, from observations of animal behaviour to compelling wildlife photojournalism and animal portraiture to urban wildlife and underwater worlds.

The annual Young Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition is free to enter for photographers aged 17 and under, and cash prizes have been introduced for each winner of the three categories in the young competition.

Entry fees are being waived for 50 countries to further encourage submissions from global regions that are currently under-represented in the annual competition, and the closing date for entries is Thursday December 9 at 11.30am GMT.

**Enter at: nhm.ac.uk/wpy**

NEW LINE

# MORALLY TOXIC BAGS HIT THE MARKET

WE'RE USED TO interesting names from the team behind 3 Legged Thing, and that chosen for the new camera bag brand certainly doesn't disappoint. The Morally Toxic moniker has been created to characterise the morals behind the brand – good working conditions in partner factories and a manufacturing process designed to minimise waste – while the toxic reference centres on the fact that the brand intends to challenge the dull, corporate-looking aesthetic of traditional bags.

It's all been five years in the making, and the first two bags – the Valkyrie camera backpack, and Wraith messenger / sling bag – feature a variety of innovations, along with smart organisation, premium comfort and luxurious fabrics to create ultimate functionality and ease of use. Setting them apart from other bags, Valkyrie and Wraith boast a range of innovations, including the 'Frog' pocket, a water-resistant wet/dry pocket that gives users a place to stash wet gear away from precious electronics.

Each of the bags is available in two sizes and three colours – Onyx, Emerald, and Sapphire – and they offer choices beyond the standard 'let's make everything black' ideology. The Valkyrie backpack is available in Medium (20L) and Large (25L) sizes and costs £259.99 and £269.99 respectively, while the Wraith camera messenger sling bag comes in Medium (15L) and Large (20L) sizes, priced at £169.99 and £179.99.

**morallytoxic.com**

UPDATES

# TWO NEW UPDATES ANNOUNCED FOR RØDE WIRELESS GO II MICS

TWO NEW UPDATES have been announced by RØDE for its Wireless GO II wireless microphone. The device can now be set up on the go with iOS and Android devices via the new RØDE Central Mobile app – the first time that a compact wireless microphone has been made fully configurable with a mobile app.

The Wireless GO II can also now be used with RØDE Connect, enabling it to be fully integrated with podcasting or streaming software. This allows users to capture broadcast-grade sound for their content with more freedom than ever before, and it's ideal for podcasting applications where creators require the freedom of wireless audio, from recording interviews to casual podcasting setups.

**RØDE Central Mobile is available for free download via rode.com/software/rode-central or from the App Store and Google Play, while RØDE Connect can be downloaded free from rode.com/rode-connect.**

EDUCATION

# SHOOT WITH A NIKON PRO!

THE NIKON SCHOOL has come up with a novel way to provide a virtual remote shooting experience alongside a top professional. During a Live Remote Shooting course, customers can participate by either watching along from the photographer's point of view, seeing the exact in-camera set up in real-time, or by actively taking part in changing the camera settings themselves from their home device.

How live remote shooting works is that a Nikon School trainer travels to a difficult to access location, such as a waterfall, and then tethers the camera to a laptop. The course is then live-streamed and photographers can join virtually. The Nikon School trainer will share their screen and give the photographer joint control over their laptop; this screen includes the same button functionality as if they were using the camera in real life, and the photographer has the opportunity to guide the Nikon School trainer in positioning the camera.

The photographer has the chance to play around with settings and either direct or capture an image. Once taken, the image displays immediately on the screen, providing an opportunity to see how the settings, camera and lens has affected the final picture. The photographer can request specific lenses or cameras to be used, including those not yet available in store, and afterwards Nikon School will send over the RAW images taken on the course.

**nikonschool.co.uk**

Tap here to find out more about Nikon Live Remote Shooting Workshops.

# SIGMA

## SIGMA I series

All-metal premium compact primes for
L-Mount and Sony E-mount systems

Contemporary
**24mm F2 DG DN**

Contemporary
**24mm F3.5 DG DN**

Contemporary
**35mm F2 DG DN**

Contemporary
**45mm F2.8 DG DN**

Contemporary
**65mm F2 DG DN**

Contemporary
**90mm F2.8 DG DN**

**Made in Aizu**

L-Mount is a registered trademark of Leica Camera AG

SIGMA 3 YEAR UK WARRANTY
For registration and conditions log on to
www.sigma-imaging-uk.com/warranty

Sigma Imaging (UK) Ltd, 1 Little Mundells, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire AL7 1EW | 01707 329999 | sales@sigma-imaging-uk.com | sigma-imaging-uk.com

# Defending the Dark

Astro photographer Josh Dury considers the night sky to be an open window to the universe and he's fighting the threat of light pollution to ensure that this classic view isn't lost to future generations.

**WORDS** TERRY HOPE **IMAGES** JOSH DURY

GIVEN THAT WE'VE GOT a focus on green issues this month to celebrate COP26, it's worth sparing a thought about damage to the environment that might not be quite so readily apparent to those that don't regularly study the night sky. But the fact is that light pollution has stealthily become a major issue over the decades as more and more of the countryside in this overcrowded island is built over, with vast amounts of artificial lighting inevitably coming in its wake.

As well as having a major impact on the lifestyles of nocturnal creatures while using up copious amounts of energy, lighting up our towns at night is also effectively blocking out our view of the universe that surrounds us. This in turn makes it far more difficult to observe the spectacle that astro photographers such as Josh Dury are using as the backdrop for their remarkable pictures and, as someone who's besotted with the night sky, Josh has determined to do something about it.

"I first became interested in astronomy and astro photography at the age of seven," he says. "I loved watching children's science fiction TV programmes and was inspired to look at the planets and the night sky using a telescope. Eventually I wanted to stretch my imagination even further and to document and ›

Josh used the standing stones at the Neolithic site of Avebury Circle to provide the foreground for this memorable Nightscape, which featured the Milky Way at its heart.

photograph my observations. I've been fascinated by the night sky ever since. I think ultimately it's the realisation that we're looking at the light of distant stars: when you think about how long this has taken to reach us it becomes totally compelling."

The transition from a focus on photography to an approach that included filmmaking occurred while Josh was studying for his degree in Bristol, where he graduated with First Class Honours in 2019. His aspiration had always been to take up a career where both astronomy and photography was involved, and now film production began to enter the equation as he started to work on a series of show reels that reflected his passion for the stars but also explored his growing concerns about how difficult it was becoming to actually see his subject clearly.

"Since I started taking photographs of the night sky I've seen a dramatic change," says Josh. "This is the direct result of light pollution on our natural environment, and it's now become a major environmental issue. Energy is required to produce lighting, which results in the release of carbon emissions. Approximately, a total of 830,000 tonnes of $CO_2$ pollution is produced from the energy wasted by the UK's streetlights alone.

"It also costs a lot of money to light up the night sky. The estimated cost of wasted light, namely that which isn't shining on the things we need to illuminate, is a staggering £1 billion a year in the UK – money that could be much better spent on tackling carbon emissions. To help address these issues, I'm keen to work with local communities, councils, lighting designers and organisations like the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England to find more sustainable lighting solutions."

## The Dark Side

As a young astronomer Josh feels strongly that his generation has a duty to warn about changes that are fast occurring and that potentially can't be reversed and, as a result, he's become fully immersed in the battle to raise public awareness of the threat to the world's night skies. He's created the astronomy organisation Space4All, which is intended to actively promote practical astronomy and to engage people from all backgrounds, and he's also become an official delegate of the International Dark Skies Association, representing Bristol and south west England.

**ABOVE:** This view, taken at night in the Cheddar Gorge, shows the scale of the light pollution problem, and it's getting worse.

**OPPOSITE:** By working at night in remote areas Josh is able to make the stars an integral part of his composition.

**BELOW:** The Abbot's Fish House in Meare, Somerset, is seen against a night sky backdrop that includes a cameo by the Neowise Comet.

"Since I started taking photographs of the night sky I've seen a dramatic change," says Josh. "This is the direct result of light pollution on our natural environment, and it's now become a major environmental issue."

"I believe you need to feel passionate about something in order to protect it," says Josh. "By focusing our efforts in developing areas we can reduce the amount of light pollution being emanated from our major towns and cities, creating more dark sky places where people can enjoy the night sky environment."

Following his graduation Josh has developed his understanding of the crucial role that photography and film production has to play in raising awareness about the big issues facing humankind. While his nightscape imagery is exquisitely beautiful and ethereal in nature, showcasing as it does classic views that are more regularly seen in the full glare of daylight, their role is intended to extend beyond simple artistry. They've also been created to reveal the connection with the vastness of the universe that's beyond the reach of the Earth and to instil in others a sense of wonder that will, Josh hopes, help to win them over to the cause he's so passionately fighting for. ›

"Capturing the perspective from here on planet Earth, when you look at my pictures you can appreciate the great scale of things and the open window we currently have to the universe," he says. "When it comes to astro imaging I'm looking to capture nightscapes that reveal detail within the foreground but also the night sky above. There can be instances where I need to shoot composite images and then work in post-production to deliver my message, but it's always done with care and true respect."

Over the years Josh has travelled the world to capture the night sky, most notably shooting the Northern Lights from Iceland in 2017 and the dark skies in the Atacama Desert in Chile in 2019, and he now has aspirations to photograph major radio telescopes, such as Mauna Kea in Hawaii and Jodrell Bank Observatory in Manchester.

Despite all this globetrotting, however, it's still locations around the UK that are closest to his heart, and his novel interpretation of the landscape hot spot that is Durdle Door in Dorset, shot with a 35mm lens, helps to reveal more about his passion for his subject.

## "Josh's camera of choice is a full frame Sony A7S II, selected because of its formidable low light abilities – its maximum ISO is 102,400, which can be extended to a mind boggling 409.600 if required."

"This was one of the most magical astro imaging experiences I've captured during the past year," he says. "There's nothing more special than to walk down to the coast underneath a blanket of stars only to look at the sink glow at the centre of our galaxy on the horizon – the galactic core. What I really like about this photograph is how the arch really stands out against the gentle glow of the Milky Way that's behind. With that, and the lapse of the waves beneath my feet, this could not have been a better experience."

Josh's camera of choice is a full frame Sony A7S II, selected because of its formidable low light abilities – its maximum ISO is 102,400, which can be extended to a mind boggling 409.600 if required – and it's also an impressive filmmaking model, favoured by a legion of professional videographers. This is generally partnered with a Sigma Art 14mm f/1.4, since the aim is not to focus in on faraway constellations but to include them as a natural part of the backdrop and to open eyes to the fact that, given a clear dark sky and a lack of intrusive artificial sources, this is the grand view that all of us could enjoy when looking upwards.

For anyone photographing in dark conditions there will always be the considerations that come with setting lengthy exposures, and the prime requisite is for a solid tripod that will be rock steady for several seconds, or longer, if required. Even the best of them, however, might require a bit of supplementary help when conditions are windy, and Josh will regularly weigh his down to improve stability, either by attaching his camera bag or using weights, and this helps to prevent sudden or subtle movements. Equally important is the Benro Geared Head that Josh works with, which enables precision control of camera movement in three directions for perfect framing.

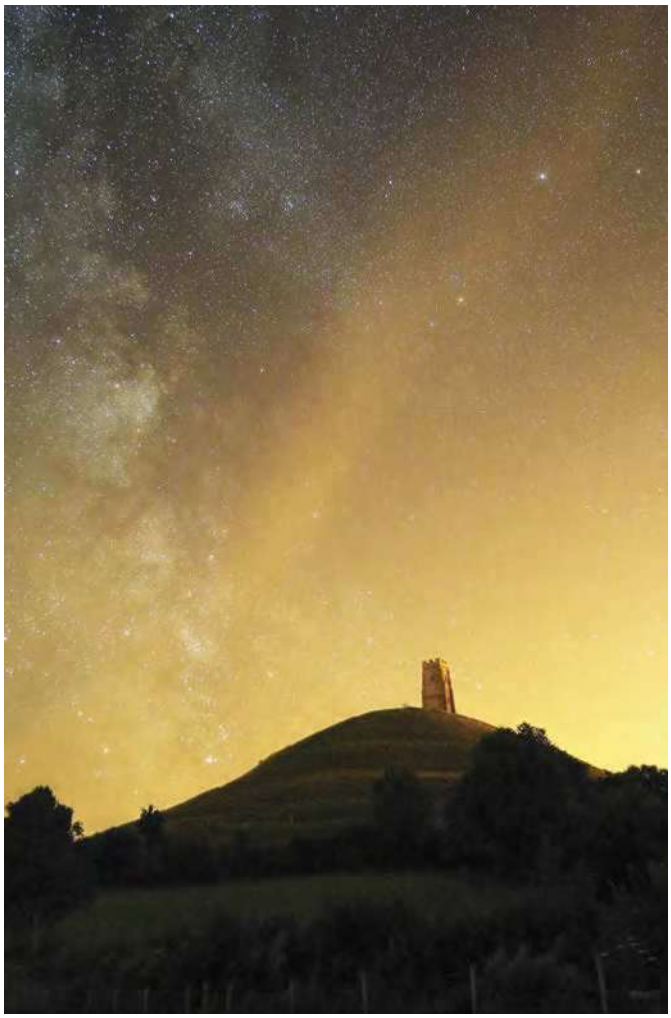
For astro photographers, however, there are further considerations, particularly if the exposure is going to be extended for long periods. Open the shutter for longer than 30 seconds and the rotation of the Earth will mean that stars will start to trail and they'll record as lines rather than points of light. To get around this issue Josh will often work with what's known as a star tracker, which can track the Earth's rotation to keep stars perfectly still.

"This works on the basis of aligning this piece of equipment with the North Star, also known as Polaris, in the constellation of Ursa Minor," says Josh. "When aligned you can work with much longer exposures and reveal fainter details. There are some great products out there from the likes of Fornax and Skywatcher, and they have a robust build and a relatively affordable price tag, from around £350 upwards, and are essential accessories for astro photographers"

While the debate about dark skies is now, belatedly,

Tap here to watch Josh's film 'Back to the Light', which explores the issue of light pollution and how it's affecting the night sky.

Tap here to view Josh's film 'Starlink – A Battle for the Skies,' which was produced to raise public awareness of the challenges posed by the Starlink Constellation.



starting to reach centre stage, there are some huge challenges coming over the horizon, as the thirst for ever faster and more efficient worldwide communication threatens to degrade what we can see of the night sky still further. In particular, an ongoing project known as the Starlink Fleet, which is looking to initially launch 12,000 satellites that will eventually be extended to 42,000, is threatening to outnumber the number of visible stars in the night sky by the year 2025. It's a scenario that, while taking on board the need for effective communications, is alarming Josh and others, to the point where he's recently made a film to reflect the misgivings of astronomers around the world at a development that could wipe out observational astronomy at a stroke.

"This is why I'm looking to be a part of a wider community to collectively raise our concerns," says Josh. "My aspirations for the future are to produce my own self-published photographic book to demonstrate my concerns for the subject of astro photography, while also setting up a series of workshops, tailored to meet the demands of photographers. I would also like to travel the world to capture more of the natural wonders of the cosmos and beyond. The impact of light pollution is degrading our views of the night sky and it's for that reason alone I wish to protect our vision of the universe for future generations." PP

**More information:**
**joshduryphoto-media.com**
**International Dark Sky Association:**
**www.darksky.org**

**PREVIOUS SPREAD:** An exposure longer than 30-seconds will give you star trails thanks to the Earth's rotation, but this can become a striking feature of an image.

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** Because of its closeness to Earth the Moon has become a regular subject for Josh, and he even managed to shoot a sequence during a Lunar Eclipse.

**LEFT:** The mysterious St Michael's Tower atop Glastonbury Tor made a perfect setting for a shot that revealed the wider universe behind.

**BELOW:** Josh describes his shoot at Lulworth Cove in Dorset as 'magical,' with the Milky Way visible alongside the iconic Durdle Door.

PROJECT

# Looking Out on Life

For some the lockdown restrictions of the past year-and-a-half meant enforced time away from the camera but Julia Fullerton-Batten used the experience as a source of inspiration.

**WORDS** TERRY HOPE
**IMAGES** JULIA FULLERTON-BATTEN

AS A COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE the shock and the emotional stress created by the lockdowns imposed over the past eighteen months will take a bit of beating. The pandemic came over the horizon and enveloped communities in what seemed like an instant, and suddenly we were all in hitherto unchartered territory. Ordered to stay inside apart from short permitted exercise periods, this was a period of deep anxiety for many, worried not just for themselves and their threatened livelihoods but for loved ones, whom they were now forbidden to see.

For photographers there was not just the wrench of losing work but also the imposed hardship of not being able to head out with a camera whenever the urge arose. A fundamental freedom had been snatched away, for a time at least, and it left creative people with time on their hands that they genuinely didn't want, coupled with an overwhelming sense that this was a time unlike any other and that it absolutely needed to be recorded in some way.

One of those who found herself looking for a way to respond to such an unprecedented situation was celebrated fine art photographer Julia Fullerton-Batten. Like the rest of us she was confined to home, but there was a determination that there had to be a way to somehow draw inspiration from adversity and to create something that would live on, long after the dark shadow of the pandemic had passed.

"Covid-19 came and life changed, probably

**LEFT:** Alice Lockdown Day 76. "I saw my nana and grandpa from down the garden. It was very nice but strange not to be allowed to give her a hug. I hope we can go back to school soon. Lockdown has made me appreciate actually being able to see my teachers and friends so much more."

irrevocably," she says. "I was numb. The normal throb of daily existence was quietened, streets were empty of people and vehicles, planes no longer flew over our heads in west London on their way to and from Heathrow. As a photographer, I felt my mission was to document this period for posterity.

"On my daily exercise walks that were permitted by government guidelines, I noticed an elderly man gazing forlornly out of his front room window. My idea for this project was sown in that instant; the scene I saw that evening was an icon for this time and became the foundation for my project that I subsequently titled 'Looking out from Within'."

While the broad outline for the project was now developing in her mind, Julia still had to find a way to give it a framework and, crucially, she had to discover the right mix of subjects for the idea to properly come together. People had to put themselves forward to be involved and they had to have stories to tell that interweaved to provide a true reflection of the world we were all living in at this traumatic time.

## Looking for Subjects

One thing in Julia's favour, however, was the fact that everyone was in the same situation, and anything that might come along to lift the monotony just for a moment, such as a photo shoot with a recognised photographer, was probably going to be well received.

"I guess my idea touched the psyche of many who were enveloped by the pandemic," says Julia, "and who were frightened out of their wits by what it threatened. People were facing a complete change ›

**ABOVE:** Kitty Lockdown Day 92. "What I miss most is the freedom and ability to be able to hop on a bus or tube train and go to the British Museum or the National Gallery for instance and then meet friends for a catch up or trip to the cinema."

**ABOVE:** Maddison and Family Lockdown Day 386.
"Gratitude really does build a positive attitude. Tried and tested! What you speak is more impacting than what you eat but I still read ingredients labels. I am most of all thankful for my relationship to the Creator, which I mainly credit for my health!"

**ABOVE:** Shem and Nora, Lockdown Day 111.
"I believe that this whole pandemic has affected me in a big way as my GCSE exams were cancelled due to the outbreak of Covid 19. This was a major upset as I started to question what my five years of learning was for but hopefully the government will help me and everyone else around me move on from this." Shem.

**LEFT:** Penelope Lockdown Day 51.
"I am very grateful to live on the river where I do, surrounded by nature, wonderful neighbours and being more still, less rushing about, has woken me up to the beauty of what is right here. It's definitely a lesson: how nothing can be taken for granted and how precious life is."

**ABOVE:** Giovanni
Lockdown Day 319.
"I am no longer able to go to work as a hairdresser, which has impacted on my finances. As I'm over 70 I have to be a lot more careful so can't socialise or see my family. I have learnt to look after myself a lot more and be thankful that I am still very healthy at my age and try and keep it that way! I have also learnt that not working can actually be enjoyable so I am finally thinking of retiring after more than 50 years."

**LEFT:** Finn and Max
Lockdown Day 37.
Max:
"Covid-19, Covid-19
My enemy
You make me not see my friends
I look around and I see people wearing masks
You made this
Are you happy? Or do you need to do more evil stuff?
What have you done?
People lying in the hospital beds
Wondering what has happened to our world
My family arguing as the time flies by
I guess I need to face the fact that this is our life for now
But Covid-19, I will get REVENGE!"

"When I posted my idea via social media it seemed to release a spirit of wider bonding and a desire to participate in this idea that offered them the chance to join together in a communal project."

**ABOVE:** Suzie Lockdown Day 32. "Currently I don't know if my career will ever get back to where it was. Or if it can be a full-time job any more. The future is uncertain, but I try and be positive that whilst I have life I have hope and maybe another direction in life."

in lifestyle and potentially the threat of themselves or members of their family, circle of friends, acquaintances or neighbours catching the virus and succumbing to it or being affected one way or another.

"When I posted my idea via social media it seemed to release a spirit of wider bonding and a desire to participate in this idea that offered them the chance to join together in a communal project. I look back on that time and still wonder what set off that tsunami of a reaction. It seemed almost as though the people of west London had been hit by some revelation to do something - anything - to remedy their daily lives positively. It was a truly remarkable project for me to be involved in. I can't say that I enjoyed it because of the reason for doing it, but it was very rewarding and I met some marvellous people along the way."

Julia found herself in the unusual situation of actually having too many subjects putting themselves forward and it meant that she needed to be selective in her choice of sitters. Logistics, especially at the start of the project, played a key part in her thinking since she had decided to work using her usual artificial lighting techniques with the ambient light, more specifically early evening twilight. She travelled to her subjects' homes with her twelve-year-old son Finn, who helped carry her equipment. It was a far cry from the usual large crew that she would more generally find herself working with and she was forced to re-learn how to make photographs more simply, as she had done in her early days as a photographer.

There was also the preparation needed, not only to select a time and date but also to discuss clothing, setting, facemasks and so on. Everything needed to be prepared well in advance of the shoot, and there were a lot of phone calls and emails flying to and fro between Julia and her sitters. During the shoot itself communication had to be carried out using hands-free smartphones or sometimes a mixture of shouting through windows or hand signals.

"Over time several variations were made to the lockdown imposed on London," recalls Julia, "the so-called Tier Systems. I shot during these periods too and, to me, these subsequent variations were all part of a long-enduring lockdown. I titled the images based on the number of days post March 26, 2020 and, as I've done in the past with other projects, I asked my sitters a few questions relevant to their experiences to find out how each of them was coping and what they were individually looking forward to when times would hopefully get better. I feel this enhances their story alongside their portrait, bringing out their personalities in an even more dramatic way.

"From the beginning, in my mind, this was a project to document this passage of time for posterity, for future generations to look back on a time when a part of London was forced to stop still by a pandemic that was sweeping the world. True, in reality London might only be a minuscule part of the geographical world, but on a geopolitical scale this is going to be an historically important topic for years to come."

## Creating a Book

Such was the momentum of the project that it soon became clear the logical way to present it was in book form, and Julia decided the route she wanted to go was to self-publish. It's the perfect means to be in control of everything from start to finish and what will emerge shortly is an 80-page beautifully-printed coffee table edition, designed by Sarah Boris and 240x330mm in size and with a foreword by Marion Tande, manager of the Department of Photography at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

To fund its publication Julia took to Kickstarter and she's edited her project down to thirty-four subjects and their stories, taken from nearly 500 days of Lockdown. "It was the first time I've used a Kickstarter campaign to fund anything," she says. "As a complete novice who's handling an important new factor in their life there were moments of trial and tribulation. However, the mountains were climbed and a positive vista now lies in front of me. In that respect, my experience has been exceedingly positive.

"Yes, it was crucial to be able to get the funding organised but, by doing so with a Kickstarter campaign, it's also concentrated my mind on book-planning related matters, such as content, size and design; how to market, package and deliver it, and definitely to budget for all aspects of its existence and future sales. Overall I've definitely benefited immeasurably from the entire experience."

As with most Kickstarter campaigns, backers are encouraged to support a venture through the promise of rewards. To promote 'Looking Out from Within' Julia offered gifts at various levels, including signed copies of the book, limited edition prints, a jig-saw puzzle and even a bespoke photo shoot.

Proving the appeal of her project the campaign smashed through its £17,000 target, set to fund the high-end production of 1000 books, and eventually finished on a spectacular £37,129, with backing from 310 supporters. For those who missed out on the Kickstarter campaign but who would still like to own a copy of the book it should soon be available for sale direct from Julia's website. PP

**More information:**
**juliafullerton-batten.com**

**TAP FOR VIDEO ▼**

Tap to watch a film made by Julia documenting her 'Looking Out from Within' project undertaken in lockdown.

**LEFT:** Serena and Chloe, Lockdown Day 16.
"My main priority is keeping myself and everyone around me safe. Staying indoors is a small sacrifice to make for the safety of others, so my main aim is to find new ways of using this time positively and taking care of my mental health."

**LEFT:** Sophie Ellis-Bextor and Richard Jones Lockdown Day 53.
"We've broadcast a little disco party from our home every Friday at 6.30pm and even though it's the maddest thing I've ever done (kids and wires everywhere), it's also kept Richard and I sane. He focuses on the technical side and does the filming and sound while I put on my sequins and sing. The kids dance and it gives us all a lift. It's been special and has made the heaviness of the world's reality a little easier to bear."

# The World According to Dench

Fully aware of the fact that professional disasters are laying in wait for photographers at any time, Dench recalls a few memorable occasions over the years when things didn't quite go to plan.

YOU'RE ONLY AS GOOD as your last job? No pressure there then. I do remind myself of this before my latest job but also the fact that I have managed to survive professional disasters, or close ones, over the years.

I recall an assignment for *The CEO Magazine* – a business magazine for senior executives – that didn't go well. It seemed straightforward enough, a head shot of some business bod in the boardroom. The flight was booked and address given. I landed in Milan and passed the address to my gesticulating taxi driver.

An hour later we crossed the border into Switzerland and 20 minutes later we were still going. The meter was at €165, I had €50. On arrival I reported to reception and asked the subject I was photographing if he could lend me €200 to pay the taxi waiting outside. I spent the shoot trying to ingratiate myself with the CEO and figure out how I'd make my return flight. He eventually gave me a lift. The magazine didn't ring again.

Photographing at a ten-day Lucid Dream workshop on the Big Island of Hawaii for *The Sunday Times* magazine was also tricky. The 16 rapt Oneironauts (look it up), who'd each stumped up $2000, spent the

morning in a classroom on the second storey of a big wooden hut at the Kalani Oceanside Retreat, their homework being to take a nap: Carpe Noctem!

I photographed the students living their dreams, in a hammock, by the swimming pool, lake, on top of a volcano (see left) and wearing their NovaDreamer mask (too complicated to explain). I tried to recreate some of their dreams in my photographs but didn't have access to dolphins, rainbows, unicorns, spaceships, dead relatives or supermodels. Overall, I had a nice time, but *The Sunday Times* magazine opened the story with an illustration.

Then there was the time *Marie Claire* magazine sent me to Italy to expand on a story reported in the local newspaper of 'Slavic Sirens' pouring over the Julian Alps, 'stealing' husbands and ruining marriages. Turned out it was just the opening of a brothel.

In the Czech Republic, meanwhile, the Easter Whip is used as part of a tradition of spanking or whipping on Easter Monday. In the morning, men gently spank women with a special handmade whip or switch called a pomlázka. The pomlázka consists of four to 24 withies (willow rods or other twigs), usually from half a metre to two metres long and decorated with coloured ribbons at the end. The whipping was supposed to be purely symbolic, a pagan celebration of fertility to bring good luck and ward off evil spirits.

However, there were rumours that the spanking had gotten out of hand. Overzealous thrashers drunk on 70% proof plum brandy, Slivovitz, were reported to be running amok. Lads' mag, *Maxim*, sent myself and journalist, Sean Thomas, to investigate. What could go wrong? The first thing was Sean booked flights to the wrong country, Hungary. The drive from Budapest to Vlčnov, a village located in the cultural region of Maravia, was four hours and three countries away.

We finally arrived in Vlčnov and made ourselves known to its 3000 inhabitants. There we met a group of lads who invited us along on their pomlázka pilgrimage the following morning. At 8am we began. They had a list of names, and it was long. The name at the top was their former maths school teacher. Her door was knocked on, the band of merry men invited in, there was a ceremonial light spanking, pleasantries and decorated eggs were exchanged, no harm done. Then someone opened the Slivovitz.

The morning quickly blurred. As responsible photojournalists, Sean and I only drank one shot to everyone else's two - I remember drinking around 20. The next thing I remember is waking up next to Sean on the canal bank, the sun was high and hot, our faces red. Thankfully my Mamiya 6 was still around my neck and passport in my pocket. It took us three hours to find the car and another six to feel sober enough to drive the short distance back to our hotel.

I'd never been so eager to pick up contact sheets from the film processing lab. I had little idea of what I'd photographed and met Sean in the historic Fitzroy Tavern in London for the grand reveal. Judging by the images, drenching local women with water seemed quite a major part of the tradition. As the contact sheets progressed, I seem to have photographed from a lower and lower angle until floored. Sean is pictured swinging a super-sized stick.

The last contact sheet was very curious. The Mamiya 6 has a retractable lens mount. If you don't extend this then the images are circular and blurred. We could just make out in the last five frames, Sean tumbling around on the grass in front of a group of onlookers, he is possibly being flogged. I'd done the job. Calamity had been averted and *Maxim* would surely be pleased, Sean and I ordered shots.

What's your next assignment? I hope it's a dream and doesn't turn into a disaster.

PP

**PETER DENCH**
An Olympus Visionary, Peter is a highly regarded documentary photographer, writer and commentator, with a wry sense of humour running through his work.
**peterdench.com**

PRO TALK

# Matty Graham

This month Matty recalls the time he was fearless in the Faroes as he considers the occasions when a pro might have to weigh up the balance between risk and reward in remote locations.

HOW FAR WOULD YOU GO for the perfect picture? If landscape or travel photography is the genre that generally puts food on your table then I'd wager you'd probably go pretty far and push a fair few boundaries along the way to get the shots you need. Most landscape and travel shooters love a bit of adventure, if not then they'd be in the wrong job. But at what point do you cross a line and risk your personal safety to get a dramatic image?

This question reminded me of a trip I took a couple of years ago to the rugged and remote Faroe Islands. It had been a busy year and I'd already completed a trip to Norway. However, as professionals, we must weigh up the value of these excursions and Norwegian locations such as Lofoten and Senja, were becoming somewhat over-saturated, making the content I captured there much tougher to sell to clients.

The Faroes on the other hand were comparatively untouched and, after building a good working relationship with the tourism board there, I jumped on a flight from Edinburgh to Vagar. The weather in the Faroes is notoriously fickle and I walked out of the arrivals lounge to be greeted by a huge blizzard.

As beautiful as the snow admittedly was, I wasn't best pleased, as the main objective of the trip was to climb the biggest mountain in the Faroes, a peak called Slættaratindur. Before flying out I had researched the best routes to follow but, because the islands had been covered in white, all points of navigation were effectively now gone.

While there were plenty of other amazing locations I could shoot in the Faroes, the most important project on this particular trip was the chronicling of the climbing of this mountain. I knew that I had an editor at the end of a laptop waiting for the words and images, while the tourism board had put up the cash for the hotel and flights so an obvious dilemma presented itself. Do I risk breaking from

my preparation and route to get the photos and the feature in the bag or do I err on the side of caution and have to make an awkward phone call?

Like any of these judgement calls, I weighed up all the pros and cons; what was at stake work wise, but also the risk to my own safety. On this occasion I thought it was a risk worth taking and so I started the long yomp up the mountain. I have to say it wasn't easy, and at one point a blizzard stormed in and the conditions were a pure whiteout. However, I've done a lot of this work and my experience and training kept me calm. The view from the top was amazing and the extra effort cemented the relationship I had with the magazine and further work followed.

## Safety First

There have been other occasions where I've put safety first or, to be completely honest, I've simply lost my bottle. On that same trip to the Faroes I was shooting on slippery rocks close to the edge of a waterfall that dropped straight into the wild Atlantic Ocean. I wasn't happy with my composition and edged nearer and nearer to the drop until I'd gone as far as my nerves allowed. There probably was a little room to go further but my spider sense told me to be safe and I had to make do with the composition I had.

I'm 100% sure that if I had fallen, that would have been fatal and no photo is worth that risk. Taking photos and video is a great way to put food on the table for my family, but I also have to make sure I actually make it home in one piece.

As a youngster starting my journey in the world of photography, I took more risks and I've been lucky they've all worked out but, as time has gone on (and my responsibilities have grown), I can feel myself becoming more sensible. I look back on some of the adventures and particularly the mountain climbs and it makes my heart beat faster, but becoming a family man has arguably limited my picture-taking opportunities. That said, every professional has to do what's right for themselves and follow their own career paths - there's no rule saying you can't look to change the way you work over time if necessary to suit your own personal circumstances.

> **Taking photos and video is a great way to put food on the table for my family, but I also have to make sure I actually make it home in one piece.**

As for the images of Slættaratindur, they ended up making a six-page feature in *Trail* magazine, the UK's number one publication for hill walkers and lovers of the outdoors. I also use the experience as a segment in many of my photography lectures. Fellow professionals can relate to the risk/reward conundrum, and there will always be that one photographer who's happy to go beyond and risk it all.

What's more, in a competitive and overcrowded world where photo budgets are continually being slashed and editors are looking for fresher content that is likely to shock or wow, there's pressure to push the envelope even further and be that fearless maverick who presents a portfolio full of vertigo-inducing compositions from remote locations. That's just not me - certainly not any longer - and even if I lose out to the guy or girl with no safety filter, I quite literally live and die by my choices. PP

**More information:**
**pixel-click.com**

**IMAGES:** Matty enjoyed a spectacular expedition to the Faroe Islands but had to make a tough call whether to undertake a mountain climb under challenging blizzard conditions.

THE ANATOMY OF A SHOOT

# Creating the Decisive Moment

Paul recalls a magical shoot with a lovely family, and the pivotal shot that emerged looks like a captured moment but was conceived and expertly executed to ensure it worked on all levels.

## PRO TIP

PLAYING GAMES IS the best way to get toddlers to do what you need. So, there was no point in posing George - this wouldn't have worked - but asking him to go and see if the giant was at home? Well, that was the perfect game for a brave little warrior!

**WORDS & IMAGES** PAUL WILKINSON

WRITING THESE IMAGE deconstructions for the magazine has proved to be an interesting exercise in both recollection and the assembling of technical details. And sometimes it emerges that the story I imagined I would be telling isn't entirely supported by fact.

For example, my memory in the case of this telling portrait of a little boy is that I saw the opportunity presented as he reached up as high as he could for the door knocker, and instantly took the shot. However, looking back through the images from the shoot, that must be a story that has evolved in my mind over the years. It doesn't match the evidence, and it transpires that capturing this particular 'decisive moment' actually took a lot more effort than I initially recalled.

It was a beautiful, sunny, early-autumn day, and I was booked to photograph a lovely family out on location. Before we took on the lease of the gorgeous studio we work out of now, this was a regular type of assignment for us: we would simply head out into the great outdoors with a family and create some beautiful images.

We were lucky with the weather, which is the one variable that's entirely beyond the photographer's control. It's one of the main reasons why we took on our studio: having to postpone fee-paying sessions due to wet weather is not good business! That said, a bit of me still loves this kind of session. The excitement, unpredictability and creativity of being in an unknown location. I also love being outdoors with nothing more than a camera and a lens – full-frame and working with my trusted 70-200mm f/2.8.

**ABOVE:** The original image was well seen but not finished, and Paul worked on it to create a classic.

## THE ASSIGNMENT

THE SHOOT WAS centred around a family, two parents and their little boy, George. We spent a couple of hours laughing and messing around, creating images as we went. Our location was the old mausoleum in West Wycombe, which sits high on a hill with commanding views of the area, along with lush meadows and rustling woodland.

Wherever possible when we're out on a location shoot such as this I try to devise a circular walk rather than one that's out-and-back. For me, this always seems to feel natural and provides continuously changing locations and lighting. On this occasion we wandered around the hillside, in and out of the trees, laughing and stopping to stage a photo or two. Note that this was a family shoot, but in this feature I'm only showing pictures of our star, George.

As the session was drawing to a close, we rounded the top of the old church as we headed back towards the car park. The day was one of those blue-sky specials, with crystal clear aqua skies and searing sunshine. Beautiful if you happen to be sitting around with a beer, but if you're shooting pictures it takes a little dealing with. We made sure that whenever we came across any spot of shade we stopped to make use of it.

George was just the perfect little boy – two years old, with a huge smile and big dimples. And, thankfully, he also had a wonderful sense of adventure. When we rounded the end of the church, I spotted this massive door and its iron handles. And, as luck would have it, it was just about in the shade – though you can see in the contact sheet of images that the shadow is a slender one. Had we arrived just a few minutes later, the sun would have swung around, and the door would have been in harsh light.

My recollection of this particular moment was that I spotted the big door and wanted to create an image out of it but, on looking closer at the contact sheet, that clearly wasn't the case. I didn't spot the opportunity for the final shot until I had played around a little in the shade, asking George to reach for the handle that was located above his head.

After a few images taken near the door, I stepped back and it occurred to me that a much stronger, more graphical image would be of the whole door with George reaching up to the handle. I have always been a fan of E.H. Shepard's pencil illustrations. Remember those original, expressive drawings of Winnie the Pooh? There's something so engagingly flat and graphical about them. So, when I – finally – spotted the opportunity with the door, it had a similar quality to it, the door creating a frame and story, with George, seemingly so very tiny in front of it, reaching up to a world unknown.

I moved back away from the door as far as possible to flatten the perspective,

**SEEING THE OPPORTUNITY:** Paul spotted the potential offered by the huge door and the small child, and he asked George to reach up to the handle. A minute or so later and the sun would have been on the door and the opportunity lost.

## PRO TIP

IF YOU WANT an orthogonal, illustration-like shot, move away from your subject, zoom in with a telephoto lens and keep the camera as horizontal as you can. This reduces converging verticals and compresses the perspective.

then zoomed in to fill the frame. This created an almost drawing-like view, with as little vertical convergence as possible – I knew the rest could be corrected in post-production.

To get George to do what I wanted we just played simple games, which is what I always try to do when I find myself working with small children. In this instance, I asked George if he thought there might be a giant living behind the door and to go and knock to see if he was at home. Much to my surprise - and his parents too! - George happily trundled across the path and rattled the doorknob. And luckily for me, he was happy to do it more than once.

The first couple of shots were taken with the camera set at a low angle but, when I looked at the image, I felt the sky reflection was too strong. I soon found that, with a slightly higher viewpoint, I could get the reflections of the trees behind me to appear instead.

As you'll see on the contact sheet, in its raw state the image wasn't all that it could have been, and I knew that as I was creating it. I just needed to capture the door and, most importantly, George reaching up to the handle. The timing needed to be perfect so that George was at full stretch to reach the handle, exaggerating the story-telling.

This happened to be the very last shot of the day, and, as is so often the case, it went on to become the one that was the defining image of the entire session.

## POST-PRODUCTION

THE FIRST STEP in post-production was to straighten everything up. This was done using Lightroom's Transform tool, ensuring that the verticals were steadfastly upright and the horizontals dead straight. Then I carried out some cloning to get rid of the planters on either side. I could have kept them in the shot and I think they would have looked good but, unfortunately, they weren't lined up with each other. Additionally, I duplicated the tiles on the floor where they were blown out in the direct sunshine. I also removed distracting details that were included in the frame, such as the automatic security light and the all-too-modern door locks.

I then applied a dense vignette around the edges of the frame and then converted the image to monochrome using DXO's Nik Silver Efex Pro 2. Then I added a simple warm tone to the mid tones - this is my favourite finish to a black and white image. So many modern papers tend to have a bluish-white base tone to them and adding some warmth during processing helps to offset this.

Overall, this is a graphic available light image with a straightforward construction and simple, elegant post-production. And that's what makes it work: it's uncomplicated but comes with a host of deeper meanings that tap into the very essence of childhood.

## MEET THE PRO

Paul Wilkinson FMPA FBIPP FSWPP is a multi-award-winning international photographer, with a boutique studio midway between Oxford and London. He is co-author of the best-selling book *Mastering Portrait Photography* and shares his skills and experience with other photographers through the free companion site masteringportraitphotography.com

Build your business and transform your photography with hundreds of lighting diagrams, articles, videos, podcasts and more, plus get answers to your questions and feedback on your images through the friendly forums and constructive critiques.

*Mastering Portrait Photography by Paul Wilkinson and Sarah Plater is published by Ammonite Press, priced £19.99. Available from* thegmcgroup.com *and all good bookshops.*

**AUTOMOTIVE PHOTOGRAPHY: PART TWO**

# Automotive

Last month Richard covered off the basics of shooting pro level images of cars and bikes and to follow up he's showing how it's possible to capture dynamic shots of vehicles in motion.

AS I MENTIONED in my feature last month, I'm a great fan of automotive photography, and there was so much to talk about it made sense to split the story into two. Accordingly, in this follow up feature I'm focusing largely on images of vehicles in motion, or what's known as 'rolling shots.'

The first and most common approach to rolling shots is the car-to-car technique. Obviously, you need an extra vehicle and two competent drivers. The idea is to ensure that your shutter speed is slow enough to give the trademark background blur, but also fast enough to ensure the subject vehicle is sharp.

Safety is paramount here and there are several techniques to learn. It's a good idea to buy or hire a full safety harness, and this fits around your upper body with a belt and clip to be attached to a solid part of the moving vehicle. You can try lying flat on your stomach in an estate car with the rear door fully open or shooting whilst hanging out of an open side window, but always ensure that you're harnessed in.

Secondly make sure your camera is attached to you, as it's all too easy to drop your precious kit and watch a few thousand pounds worth of uninsurable camera bounce down a tarmac road when it slips from your grasp. A simple hand strap works very well. I like to use a small box van like a Ford Transit and slide the side doors completely open. Lie on the floor and harness yourself to the other side of the

# Action

**WORDS & IMAGES** RICHARD BRADBURY

Using a car rig can give drama-filled images such as the one above, even if your vehicle is only going slowly.

van. It works best with a white van as you then have a perfect rolling reflector to make the subject shine. Finally, it's important to brief the van and vehicle driver and make sure all of you can speak via mobile phones or walkie talkies to make finite adjustments as you go. Find a stretch of private road and shoot at around 1/125sec – 1/30sec for best results. A speed of 30mph or less should be perfect, and shoot a lot because most of your pictures will be unsharp and unusable.

You can use any of the devices mentioned already to help steady the camera, but if your camera or lenses feature image stabilisation that should prove adequate for stable hand held shots on a smooth road surface. You can also use a gimble to get really stable shots. ›

## CAR RIGS

If you want to achieve that super polished, billboard poster, car ad look, for ultimate control you can use a car rig. These are highly specialised, as they're designed exclusively for vehicle photography. Rigs are modular and can be set up to offer different angles and effects on most moving vehicles. The classic set up consists of two or three lightweight vertical uprights about 30–40 cm long, securely attached to the car roof, windscreen and/or bonnet with industrial strength suction pads.

Mounted horizontally to the uprights is a very long, lightweight pole and your camera hangs from the far end of the pole. Using a wide-angle lens, often with the camera mounted upside down, you get a very dynamic view of the car plus, of course, the pole set against the sky, and you then remove the pole in post-production.

With the camera set at anything from half a second to four or even eight seconds, the car is pushed or rolled for just a few feet without the engine running as that could introduce vibrations. The trick is to make sure the camera on the end of the long pole doesn't sway or bounce as the car is moved. You can employ an assistant to help by holding a delicate finger on the camera whilst moving, or you can attach suspension wires to the pole to add stability, but the best technique is to ensure the pole is very light and rigid.

It's also worth noting that this technique only works on a smooth track or road surface. The length of the pole obviously impacts on the amount of movement, but you should really be looking for at least 3-4 metres for a reasonable view of the car. Using a wide lens will always be a restricting factor, so try to use as near to a standard lens as you can. If you're working with a zoom don't forget to lock or tape this up at the focal length you require.

The most important pieces of kit from a safety point of view are the suction mounts. These need to be industrial strength and will have to be pumped up when placed on the car. The pump button usually has a red line to indicate that full adhesion has occurred and, if the red line re-appears during the shoot, then the suction cup is becoming detached so beware.

There are two other things to remember when shooting rolling rig shots. For a start you must have a neutral density filter and a remote shutter release device. The UK is not known for its bright sunlight, but even here on a sunny day you will find that four to

## CAR RIG KIT

**NOTTINGHAM-BASED Hague Camera Supports build and supply all the kit you need to make up your own car rig. They even offer a very well-priced starter kit for just £275 that includes everything you need for a working rig with a 1.9 metre telescopic pole.**

**Productiongear based in Hertfordshire are distributers for The Kupo Car Rig system. A 4-metre carbon fibre pole comes complete with high grade pump suction units and an adjustable mounting arm. It's a more expensive option at £1164, but it's a well-made, solid solution.**

**My final recommendation is Car Camera Rig. Their budget kit has a 4-metre pole and is priced at £834. At the other end of the scale, their Pro rig has a 9-metre pole, 54mm in diameter, made of 2.2mm carbon fibre and this comes with support wires and a neat carry case. At £3880 it's only for the full-time car photography specialist, but it's well worth the extra money.**

**Car Camera Rig even offer a half day Camera Rig live workshop for just £102. If you want to learn the right way to approach rig-based rolling shots or take your skills to another level this course is great value. Most of these kits can also be hired from the makers on a daily rate.**

eight seconds is difficult to accommodate, even at apertures of f/16 plus. I use a variable ND filter, which can be quite pricey but they save a lot of space in your camera bag. Good reliable makes include Syrp, Freewell and the Polar Pro - Peter Mckinnon Edition. They are all pretty good: you can buy cheaper versions, but personally I wouldn't spend less than £100 or more than £300 on a good, long lasting variable ND.

A decent radio remote shutter device is a great companion and really useful for car rigging, as you can let the car roll and choose the perfect moment to release the shutter remotely. Alternatively, you can always set your camera timer to shoot a few seconds after you press the release button to avoid unwanted vibrations.

Ultimately you need to be prepared to shoot plenty of frames, and it's also worth mentioning that, as with all photography, you shouldn't let technical requirements dominate your creative vision. Choose the right location and think carefully about lighting and camera angle before you set up your kit and take your time to get it right.

With a few pieces of specialised kit and a touch of creativity your portfolio can quickly develop. Access to that three-million-pound Bugatti might be a little trickier to arrange, but don't be afraid to ask your local car dealer if they have a few suitable super cars in need of sales shots! PP

**More information:**
**richardbradbury.com**

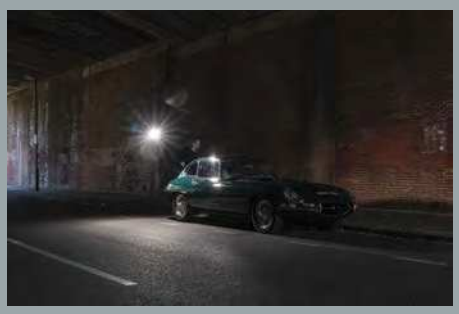
Richard Bradbury's latest book 'Mastering Lighting and Flash Photography' (Ammonite Press) is available, priced at £13.78 from Amazon.

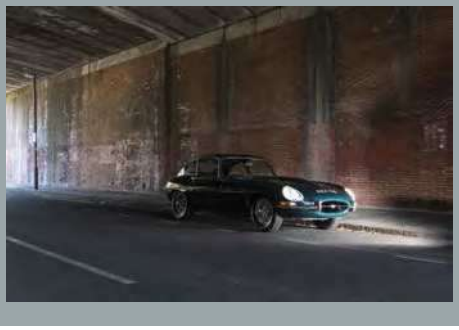
# POST-PRODUCTION

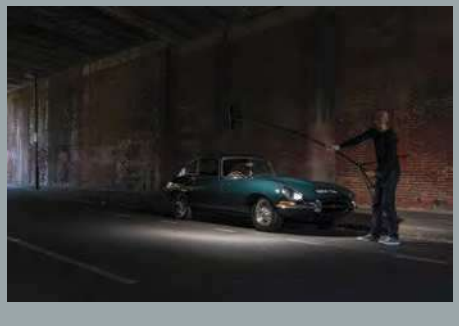
ONE OF THE ADVANTAGES of digital shooting is the ability you have to combine several exposures in one frame at the post-production stage. This in turn enables you to create multiple light sources from a single fixture. Using either flash or continuous lighting, you can create almost any effect you wish without the expense of huge lighting rigs.

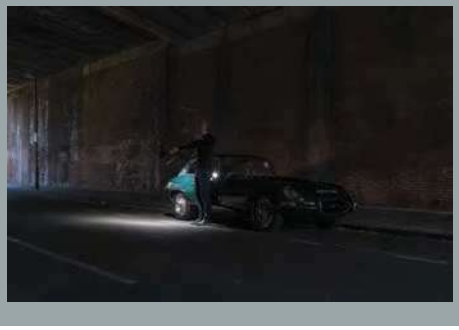
With the camera attached to a solid tripod base with fixed focus you're able to build up a series of images, lighting different parts of the vehicle individually. You can then choose the multiple frames you think will work best, and import these into Photoshop stacked up in layers. By applying the 'Lighten' blending mode to each layer you can highlight only the lit part of each. Carefully masking each layer, you can then paint back and forth to slowly reveal the image as if it were lit with any amount of lights, using such things as close-up lights on the rubber tyres and more subtle effects on the larger reflective panels. This technique does require a bit of trial and error before you'll be able to perfect it, but can look amazing.

BELOW: This final image was pieced together from over 30 different frames using just one light. The location I used was carefully selected to be low light so the flash would have the maximum effect. The union flag background was the final touch in post-production.









# DxO PhotoLab 5 and FilmPack 6

The latest releases from software developer DxO sees PhotoLab and FilmPack receive substantial upgrades. Amy-Leigh Atkins takes a closer look to see what's on board. **WORDS & IMAGES** AMY-LEIGH ATKINS

THERE'S NOT ONE but two new releases announced by DxO for me to take a look at, namely PhotoLab 5 and FilmPack 6. In PhotoLab 5 we're looking at improvements to the local adjustments, the metadata options in photo library and faster performance with the DeepPRIME denoising tool, which now supports Fujifilm X-trans sensors in beta. Meanwhile in FilmPack 6 we're transported to a world of inspiration and creativity in a way that's never been done by any software before. Here's a more detailed look at what DxO is delivering in these new products.

**LAUNCH PRICING: DxO PhotoLab 5 ESSENTIAL Edition: £99.99 instead of £129.**
**DxO PHOTOLAB 5 ELITE EDITION: £149.99 instead of £199.**
**Photo Lab 4 owners can purchase an upgrade on the website.**

## PHOTOLAB 5

### LOCAL ADJUSTMENTS

DxO is further advancing what are considered to be the most efficient and intuitive local retouching and adjustment technologies available by adding a second type of pointer: Control Lines. This new tool complements the technology's existing Control Points by allowing users to carry out touch-ups on large areas with an easy-to-use selection method.

To make them even more precise, Control Lines and Control Points are now equipped with sensitivity settings. Photographers can easily adjust the effect of their edits based on the luminance and chrominance of the targeted areas. It's not a feature I've seen before and it makes masking an area effortless and precise.

### MORE METADATA MANAGEMENT

PhotoLab 5 now processes IPTC and EXIF data and third-party application synchronisations. It also includes advanced means of keyword prioritisation via an interactive tree structure. In addition, this new version optimises the software's photo library management tools by reorganising them.

### DEEPPRIME – DEEPER LEARNING

Trained by deep learning methods using millions of images analysed in DxO laboratories over the past 20 years, DeepPRIME technology is utilising AI to develop RAW files. This dramatically improves digital noise reduction while ensuring more efficient demosaicing. Traditionally, these two operations have been carried out separately, each of course with the potential to introduce flaws that adversely affect the quality of the other. With deep learning, DeepPRIME instead takes a holistic approach that combines the two steps into one, thereby delivering much improved results.

The deep-learning approach of DxO PhotoLab 5 and DeepPRIME in particular has been significantly optimised in terms of reactivity as well as processing and export times. These improvements are available to everyone but will be up to four times faster for those who are Apple Silicon Mac users and 1.5 times faster on the best Windows machines.

### SUPPORT FOR FUJIFILM X-TRANS SENSORS (BETA)

Finally, there's great news for the Fujifilm community. For the first time ever, DxO PhotoLab 5 now supports Fujifilm X-Trans sensor cameras. This is currently in beta, so DxO welcomes any feedback, that can be submitted via its website:
**dxo.com/feedbacks-xtrans-beta**

# FILMPACK 6

**LAUNCH PRICING: DxO FilmPack 6 ESSENTIAL Edition: £48.99 instead of £75. DxO FILMPACK 6 ELITE EDITION: £99.99 instead of £129.**

## A CULT CLASSIC RETURNS WITH MORE BANG!

This latest version of FilmPack introduces new films, cinematographic renderings and support for X-Trans RAW files (Beta). It features a wide array of new effects as well as a feature known as Time Machine, basically an interactive introduction to the history of film photography.

DxO FilmPack reproduces the grain and colours of legendary analogue films as closely as possible, thanks to an exclusive calibration process perfected in its laboratories. The software recreates the hues, saturation, contrast, and grain of 84 authentic analogue films, including Kodak's Tri-X 400, Polaroid 690, Ilford HPS and Fujifilm Superia.

## TIME MACHINE

DxO FilmPack 6 provides users with a true journey through time, offering an introduction to the history of analogue photography. The software introduces a new way of displaying creative and analogue renderings, separated into 14 periods illustrated by iconic images and famous photographic figures.

Each photograph is documented from a technical and historical perspective, and users are provided with the closest rendering so they can apply it to their images and recreate a similar style and finish. In this way, for example, users can infuse their black-and-white images with the charm of the 50s or even the soul of William Klein's art. So far I've spent hours flicking through all the information available, and it's a pleasure to use and a must for any photographer to experience.

## NEW FILM EMULATIONS

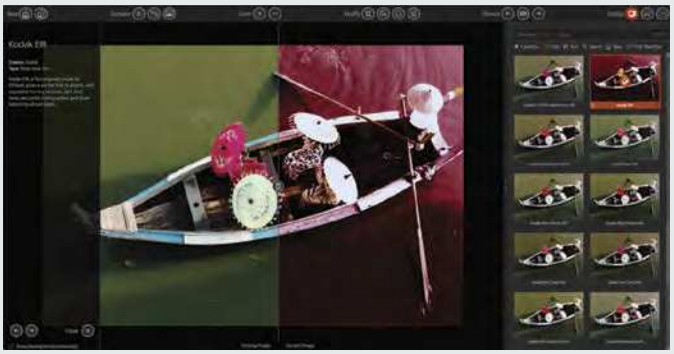
DxO FilmPack 6 delivers 15 new renderings. Specifically, these are two legendary films, the famous Kodak Ektachrome Professional Infrared EIR Colour Slide Film and the monochrome instant film for the Polaroid 600 camera, Impossible PX 600 Silver Shade, plus seven film simulation modes from X-series Fujifilm digital cameras and six cinema renderings inspired by the biggest trends in cinematographic colour grading.

## CREATIVE EFFECTS

DxO FilmPack 6 also opens up uncharted creative possibilities with 20 new effects, including drops and crumpled paper, which are designed to give images a vintage look; 15 new light leak effects, such as light spots, haze, and zoom, which add subtle plays of colour; and 15 new frames, namely matte, black frame, and film border, that transform your images.

## FULLY CUSTOMISABLE SPLIT TONING

A new colour rendering engine, based on eight rather than the previous six channels, delivers precise colour control. Users can select their own hue in highlights and shadows, combine colours and achieve realistic split toning.



## VERDICT

DxO HAS DELIVERED the goods with its all-in-one PhotoLab 5 suite. In particular the unique control delivered by U-point technology in the masking tools is an absolute must for photographers. It makes any masking job completely effortless, and doing this any other way in other suites would now, quite frankly, feel slightly painful. This deserves to be the industry leading software and if you haven't yet tried it out then give the free trial a go and you'll not be disappointed.

Meanwhile, with FilmPack 6 it's again the attention to detail that's a cut above the rest here and DxO has completely thought outside of the box and created something that delivers a great user experience. For anyone interested in photographic history, you can be inspired by iconic creators and their imagery whilst editing your own work in a new way that brings back the fun factor and injects a world of creativity into what can sometimes be in danger of becoming a sterile part of the image making process.

AFFINITY Photo

ORIGINAL IMAGE BY @ERIK_LUCATERO

# Add Power to Portraits

If you're in the business of selling portraits it doesn't hurt to present some alternatives to clients, and using Affinity Photo's blending mode feature ramps up impact and atmosphere.

**WORDS AND ADJUSTED IMAGES** MATTY GRAHAM

EVER LOOKED AT one of your portrait images and thought that perhaps it could do with it a little something to take it to the next level? Converting a colour frame to black & white is one well-trodden option, but that only gets you halfway. To really inject something special and breathe new life into your portrait you could look at going further, for example by overlaying a textured frame over the top.

The key feature behind this clever technique is a simple one and can be found in Affinity Photo's Layer panel. Blending Modes changes the way the pixels on an upper Layer seep through and are visible and this whole technique takes just a couple of minutes to work through. Not only does this technique help bring a fresh approach to the way you present portraits but it also means you can get super creative, since virtually any texture can be utilised. From wood and stone through to brick and paper, pretty much anything goes.

## STEP ONE

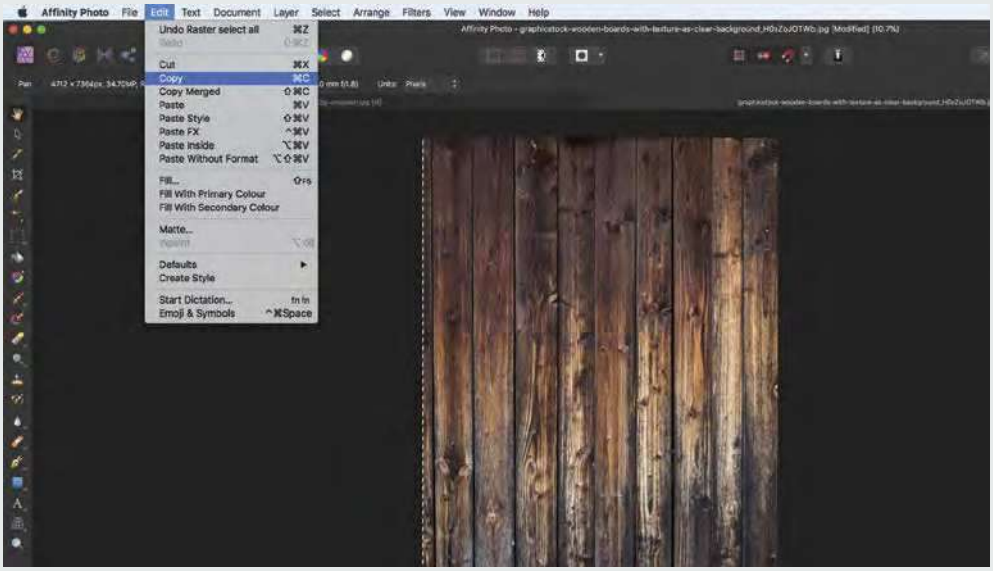
### ADD A B&W ADJUSTMENT LAYER

Open your image in Affinity Photo and make sure that you're in the **Photo persona**. To edit in a non-destructive manner, the first job is to head to the **Layers panel** and create an **Adjustment Layer**. Click on the half-black/half-white icon and scroll up the menu to select the **Black & White** option.

## STEP TWO

### BALANCE YOUR EXPOSURE

A dialogue box will appear with several colour sliders. Take your time and adjust these sliders to control the exposure in your frame and make sure the highlights in your image aren't overexposed. The sliders that will affect skin tones in portraits are **Red** and **Yellow**.




## STEP THREE

### SELECT A TEXTURE IMAGE

Choose the texture image you'd like to use and open it up in Affinity Photo. Select all the pixels by clicking **Control & A**. Next, click **Control & C** to copy all of the pixels in your texture image and then close this file down. Back at your portrait, click **Control & V** to paste the pixels over your portrait image and a new **Layer** will appear.

## STEP FOUR

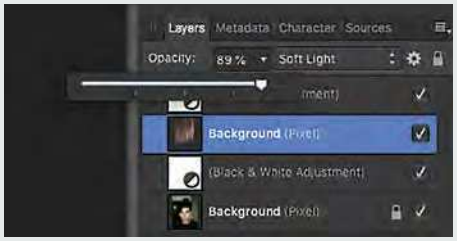
### CHANGE THE TEXTURE TO BLACK & WHITE

Colour textures can work well but can also be very distracting, so the best approach is to convert them to **Mono** also. This can be done very quickly by making sure the **Texture Layer** is selected and hitting **Control & U** on the keyboard to create a **HSL adjustment Layer**. The HSL dialogue box will appear and all you then have to do is to drag the **Saturation slider** all the way to the left to remove any colour from the Texture Layer.

## STEP FIVE

### CHANGE THE BLENDING MODE

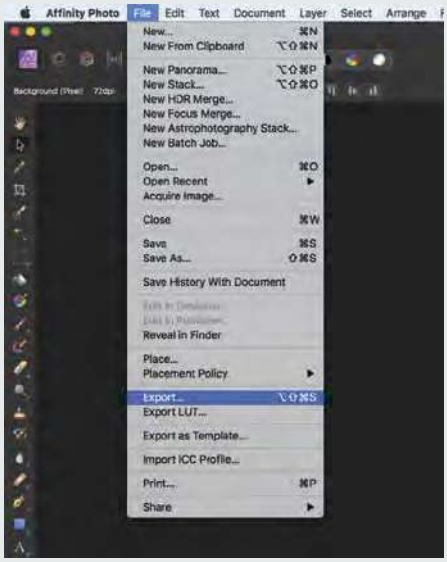
The image will only be showing the texture, so the next task is to merge the texture with the pixels from your portrait. Head back to the **Layers panel**, Select the **Texture Layer** and change the **Blending Mode** from Normal to either **Overlay** or **Soft Light**. If the effect is still too strong, you can lower the **Opacity** bar to bring down the strength of the Texture Layer.



## STEP SIX

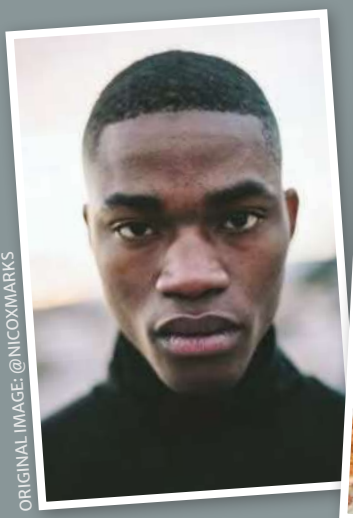
### MOVE THE TEXTURE

Depending on what texture you use, you may wish to move this Layer around and also shrink or expand it to better suit your portrait. Make sure the **Texture Layer** is selected and click on the **Move tool** (the keyboard shortcut is V). Handle lines will surround the frame and you can drag these to move the Layer or resize it. Making further adjustments such as **Brightness/Contrast** can add that extra punch to your frame and when you're happy head to **File** and scroll to **Export** before saving the file in your chosen format (JPEG, TIFF etc).

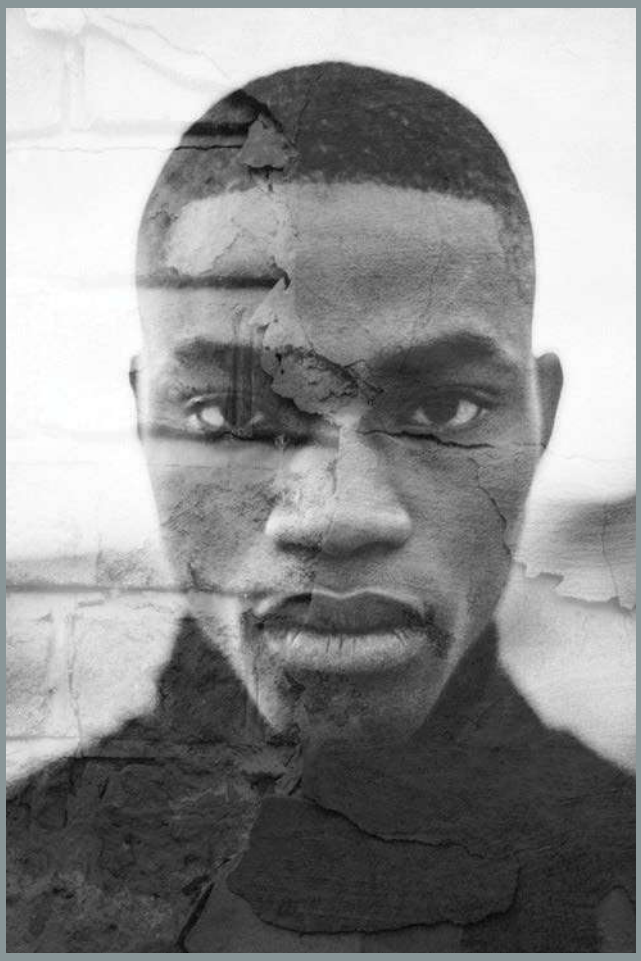


# ANYTHING GOES FOR TEXTURES

ONE THE BEST elements of this technique is the creative freedom it offers photographers, as anything can be used as a texture to overlay on top of your portrait. I always recommend carrying a camera and stopping to snap a texture whenever you see one. Pretty soon you'll have a bank full of texture options to try out with your portrait imagery. Alternatively, you can always visit sites like Unsplash to grab textures you might not have access to normally.



ORIGINAL IMAGE: @NICOXMARKS



ORIGINAL IMAGE: @CHRISJOELCAMPBELL

**ABOVE AND LEFT:** Alternative results achieved using this same technique. Always be on the lookout for useful textures and build up a library of images that you can call on when you're looking for inspiration.

AFFINITY Photo

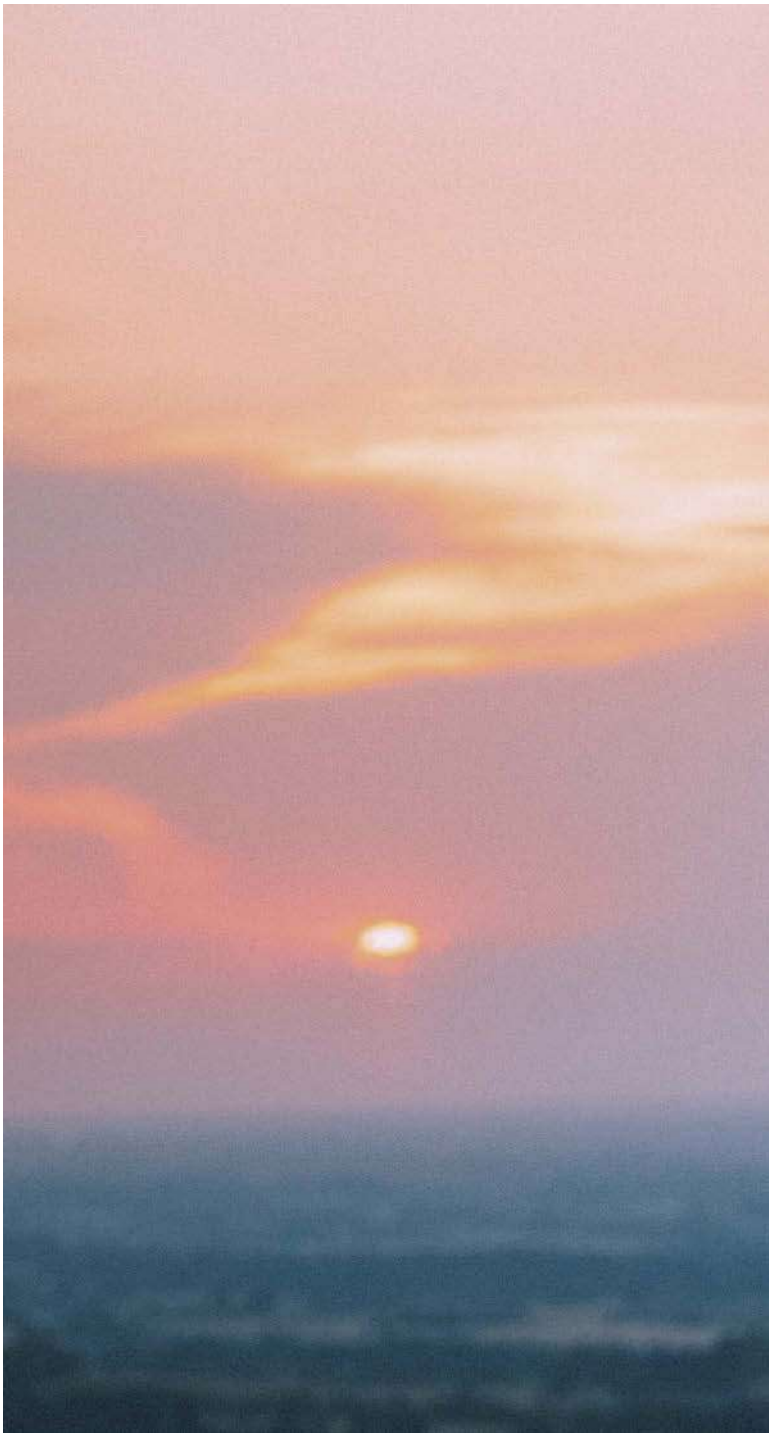
**More information:**
affinity.serif.com

## VIDEO

Click here to watch an exclusive video where Matty talks through this and other useful Affinity Photo post-production techniques in real time.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH CVP

# Box of Tricks



It might not be the highest profile of accessories out there but the humble matte box can have a crucial role to play for creatives in terms of controlling light hitting the lens and filter use.

CONJURE UP A vision of a film camera operator and the chances are that you'll envisage the camera with a matte box fitted to the front of the lens. It's such a well-honed image as to be almost a cliché and, to many, it defines the very essence of being a professional. But what is the job of this much-loved and regularly used accessory, why might you need to work with one and is it something that only high-end cinema cameras might employ or could those working with DSLRs and mirrorless cameras also benefit from using one? And is this something that photographers, as well as filmmakers, could find useful?

To find the answers to all of these

IMAGE ©riccardosanmartini.com

questions we caught up with our regular expert at CVP, technical marketing manager Jake Ratcliffe, to find out more, and he's in the perfect position to look at this particular product from both sides of the coin, having been someone who initially trained as a stills photographer but who subsequently moved into film production.

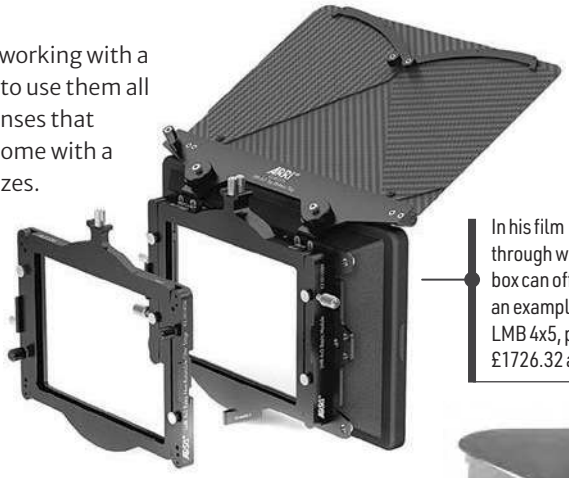
"For those who might not have come across a matte box before, this is a tool used during video, TV and cinema production that comes with two key functions," he says. "The first is to help control the light coming into your lens, and this is done via the hood as well as the French flags, which are the top flags and the barn doors, which are the side flags. Adjusting these can quickly and easily help you to control the light coming into your lens, subsequently reducing or cutting flare or glare consistently across your shots, and by doing this it also has the effect of increasing contrast throughout your image.

The Vocas range of matte boxes represent a highly affordable first step into the market, and an introduction to their qualities.

"The second component is adding filtration. The system behind this depends on which model of matte box you're using, but it's been designed to be quick, easy and versatile. It's one of the main reasons why matte boxes have become the standard for cinema work, over a screw-on filter system, which can prove to be much more cumbersome and time consuming to use.

"Overall, there are several different sizes of cinema filters available, such as 4x4, ›

4x5.65 and 6x6, and by working with a matte box you'll be able to use them all across a wide range of lenses that might, between them, come with a variety of filter thread sizes. You can even stack filters if required and, crucially, this saves time, which is always good when you're on a film set. It also means that you'll be handling the filters less when you come to swap lenses."



In his film Jake talks through what a matte box can offer, using as an example the Arri LMB 4x5, priced at £1726.32 at CVP.

From this explanation it can be seen that matte boxes will perform roughly the same kind of role as a straightforward lens hood might, but they are far more sophisticated and deliver much more in the way of precise control. The fact that they can also assist in speeding up filter switchovers is another big reason why they've become such a staple of professional filmmaking life.

The MAT4X56 Matte Box from Shape is a mid-range price at £762 from CVP, and is compatible with a number of lenses.

Those flags, for example, can be minutely adjusted, either in tandem with each other or individually, and you'll be able to see in real time the effect they're having. You'll also usually have locking nuts that will be slackened off so that they can be moved into the position you want and then tightened up again to hold them there.

Some of the more sophisticated versions will also come with features such as extensions, that can swing out to help cut down on unwanted light even further. You can easily remove them as well if you need to run a more stripped-down configuration for lighter camera packages. Some seasoned filmmakers might even work with matte boxes that feature grips, like a set of handles, on each side, which can be used if you're working hand held with your camera set-up. "Ultimately it's all down to personal preference," says Jake, "and working with handles is not something I would recommend unless you're certain your camera is rigged up securely and it's a shooting style you're happy with."

## WHICH TO CHOOSE

You might look at a matte box and imagine that it's fairly low-cost item, and some of them certainly are very affordable, but the top-of-the-range versions, that might be used by cinematographers working on large productions, can cost hundreds or even thousands of pounds. Their value is determined by the range of facilities they have on board and their build quality. Many of the higher end matte boxes, for example, are constructed from carbon fibre, which makes them lightweight, durable and easy to carry around, and they will also have a large eco-system of accessories backing them up. The higher-end products are also likely to make use of a bar support system, which can be either 15mm or 19mm, depending on the size of the camera outfit you happen to be working with.

At the higher end of the scale these will be items that many filmmakers could potentially hire in for a particular shoot, but if you're regularly working on video productions and these have become part of your staple workload then it pays to buy your own. If this is the case then, as always, CVP extends an open invitation for creatives to fix up an appointment and to come in to have a demonstration of what's available and some equipment-agnostic advice to provide a useful steer towards what might be the best product to invest in.

All of which is useful since, especially for those who are maybe just making the move into filmmaking from a photographic career, there is a bewildering amount of choice out there. So, what do you get for your money and are some of the more affordable matte boxes stocked by CVP still capable of doing a good job?

"There are reasons why some matte boxes will be considerably more expensive than others," Jake explains, "and, of course, the higher priced models will offer more flexibility and a higher level of finish perhaps. However, there are still plenty of solid and more affordable options on the market for creatives who are looking to acquire their first matte box. Another option is to rent out a mid-range kit first to see if the workflow of using a matte box is for you, and this will allow you to find out without having to make a big up-front investment.

"If you do want to use a matte box in tandem with a DSLR or mirrorless camera then you might find you need to add a few accessories to help integrate it into your camera package, and we can certainly help to recommend the exact kit that you'll be needing for this."

Take a look at our Mini Test of the Smallrig Mini Matte Box (CVP price £91) on page 81 of this issue to get a feel for what an entry level product might look like, and this is purpose built for DSLR and mirrorless cameras and so would be an excellent first toe into the water for a pro photographer looking at whether matte boxes might be a way they're looking to go. It's affordable and capable of doing an excellent job, and maybe down the line a step up to something more fully-featured could result if the experience turns out to be positive.

The SmallRig Mini Matte Box, reviewed on page 81 of this issue, costs just £91 from CVP and yet can still do a great job.

So the case is pretty much made for

The classic image of the filmmaker will generally always show them working with a matte box on the front of the camera and it's almost a universal accessory for the pros.

**VIDEO ▲**

In this film by CVP, Jake Ratcliffe tells you everything you need to know about working with matte boxes.

matte boxes to become an indispensable accessory for those looking to make movies on a regular basis, and they will inevitably add a professional touch to your appearance if you turn up with one on a shoot with a client to impress. However, for those who are working as hybrid operators, will they also have a use in still photography?

For some situations they could be a little over the top perhaps, and a combination of a lens hood and a single flag – which could be something as straightforward as a piece of black card and a flexible arm to hold it in position – could also potentially do the job.

Likewise with filters, and the move towards magnetic varieties in recent years has certainly made life easier, with way less of the fiddling around having to try and engage the filter thread. So, you might not need to fit a matte box in order to be able to work seamlessly with these varieties, but then again they do offer an all-in-one solution and a very good one at that.

While photographers might, by and large, opt not to work extensively with matte boxes they do definitely have their uses in this department and so don't rule them out. They might be bulkier than a lens hood and not so suited to the fast-action type shoots, but for a controlled studio situation they can do an amazing job and they'll give you a high level of control, which might be exactly what you need.

They will also come into their own for any filmmaking jobs you have coming up, so take a closer look at their specifications, check out Jake's excellent film about matte boxes that we've provided a link to here and see whether or not this an accessory that you too could grow to love! PP

**cvp.com**

## JAKE RATCLIFFE

ONE OF CVP's resident team of technical experts, and a self-confessed camera nerd who gets way too excited over kit, Jake's background mirrors that of so many creatives these days. After graduating with a degree in photography, he took up a freelance career and found that many of his clients were asking for video services so, rather than turn the work away, he started to teach himself the filmmaking basics. Having been based at CVP for four years now, Jake epitomises the 'equipment agnostic' approach of the company and devotes his time to advising customers who might be looking for impartial feedback on which products to invest in as they look to make the same journey into motion.

If it's rock-solid footage combined with silky smooth panning you're after then a Manfrotto tripod and Nitrotech 612 fluid head combo fits the bill. Rick Bronks takes a closer look.

# Solid *and* Super Smooth

IMAGES BY YONI BRONKS

The Manfrotto Nitro 612 Fluid Head allows you to perfectly counterbalance your kit, delivering stunningly smooth movement for very little effort.

IT'S THE MOST BASIC of kit but, in many ways, the most essential. It's something we all have probably owned at least one of – whether it be for stills or video work - but the humble tripod has come of age in recent years and a new era of super-smooth, rock steady kits is now upon us.

Having a solid platform for your camera gear is absolutely critical – if you're a stills photographer you already know this, but things are a little different once you start looking at the moving image.

Lots of folk start off using a stills tripod for their video shoots thinking 'well, it will do', but this isn't really ideal. Unless you're only ever planning on using locked-off shots with relatively lightweight kit then the need for a bespoke video tripod will come calling pretty quickly.

As with lots of kit, the mantra of 'buy once, buy well' really does ring true when it comes to tripods. Don't be lured into buying cheap stuff – it won't perform well and, crucially, would you really want to trust putting all of your expensive kit on a platform that might fail or worse still – fall?

Enter the Manfrotto 645 Fast Twin Alu tripod, a substantial set of quick lock legs that form the base for the highly futuristic Nitrotech 612 fluid head. The latter is a stunning looking piece of kit but, of course, it's not all about appearance – it's what's under the hood that really counts.

Let's get down to basics. The head can take a load weight of 4kg to 12kg which, for me, is pretty much perfect. Sometimes I'll be working with just a very basic set-up of camera/lens, but with all that leeway I can load the head up to accept a full rig with all the bells and whistles – including cinema lenses, a full teleprompt rig, camera monitor, wireless transmitter and even an external audio recorder if required.

In short, this is one tripod head that you'd be hard pressed to max out. It's really important to think forward in this way when you're looking at a set-up as a long-term investment. Your kit overall weight is important but always allow 10-20% extra 'just in case'. You also need to consider that you might - like me – end up working with a range of different cameras, sometimes perhaps hiring them in depending on the job, and you need to be covered.

## NITROTECH TECHNOLOGY

The Nitrotech part of the name comes from the impressive technology that's tucked away inside the head. It's based

around a Nitrogen filled piston, which is used when counterbalancing your camera. The big advantage of this arrangement is that you can dial in the exact weight of your rig. Do this and you can leave the camera and it will be perfectly balanced.

This is where you'll find the biggest difference between stills and video tripods. The video tripod will have fluid-dampened pan and tilt mechanisms and, in the case of the Nitrotech 612, also a piston, and all these elements work beautifully together to get you buttery-smooth pans and tilts with absolute precision. It's designed to perform in all weathers too, so it won't freeze or become too runny whatever the conditions you're working in – it's designed to keep on going from -20 through to to 50 degrees Celsius!

**All the controls of the head are on the same side, making it easy to adjust whilst keeping your other hand on the pan arm. There's even a little light that shows the spirit level clearly at night.**

VIDEO ▲

Watch Rick's film where he tests out the Manfrotto 645 Fast Twin Alu tripod and Nitrotech 612 fluid head to see what they have to offer the videographer.

All the controls of the head are on the same side, making it easy to adjust whilst keeping your other hand on the pan arm. There's even a little light that shows the spirit level clearly at night. The quick release plate also just drops in rather than you having to slide it across the head, which can be a little tricky with a heavy rig on top. You can of course adjust the drag of the pan and tilt as well as lock them down totally.

The key to this is to make sure the camera is 'balanced' on the tripod – so after you've popped it onto the plate, the lock lever will snap into place. Take a look at the little spirit level and make sure the head is level. Next, adjust all the controls to their minimum and allow the head to be as loose as possible. Before you set anything else you'll want to find the centre of gravity of the camera. The clever locking plate design allows it to slide but not come out of the mount, so move it along slowly back and forth until the head sits level and then lock off the tripod plate by pushing the lever back.

Now it's time for the Nitrotech system to come into play and you can adjust how much counterbalance you want. Counterbalancing means you can position the camera in any position you like and it won't tip back or down under its own weight. This means that with the perfectly balanced and counterbalanced strength you'll get stunningly smooth movement with very little effort, and this will be through the entire tilt range. It's time to say goodbye to droopy cameras!

Continuous counterbalance is fantastic and, once you've tried it out, you'll see what I mean. Pull out the counter-balance control and start to turn it anti-clockwise all the way to the minimum (it's printed on the handle) with the tilt brake unlocked. Keep one hand on the pan bar and start to tilt the camera forward then backward.

If it keeps moving when tilting forward you need to add more counterbalance, so turn the lever a little more clockwise. Make it too strong and the camera will then try to go horizontal again, and if this happens loosen off a little, which will decrease the piston power. It won't take long to figure out and you'll soon find the sweet-spot. You'll know when this happens because the camera will stay locked in place for any tilt angle on the whole range.

The base of the Nitrotech 612 head is also flat, which is good news if you have a slider or jib. Just unscrew the head and then simply partner it with a different accessory if required. Of course, it can also be used with a ball attachment with the legs to deliver very quick levelling.

Another neat feature is the addition of a mounting thread on the side, which means you can screw in the likes of magic arms. Manfrotto has versions that will grip and not rotate, making them ideal for monitors. Mounting the monitor to the tripod head rather than the camera means it's carrying less weight and the monitor won't move when you tilt up or down, but will pan with you as you turn the head. Sometimes I also use this connection for an audio recorder, which ensures it's at the perfect working height.

Overall this is a fantastic head on solid, fast setup legs, and it's one of those accessories that's going to stay with you for a very long time. If you fancy seeing the Manfrotto 645 Fast Twin Alu tripod and Nitrotech 612 fluid head in the flesh and trying it out for yourself then get in touch with CVP and fix up to visit their Newman House Showroom in London's Fitzrovia: just enquire via the CVP website or call 0208 380 7400. On site you'll find a room full of cutting-edge kit that's just ready and waiting for you to get hands on, together with a team of experts full of equipment agnostic advice to steer you in the direction of the kit you need. PP

**More information:**

- **manfrotto.com/uk-en/**
- **cvp.com**
- **Rick: satureyesmedia.com**

# The return of Medium Format?

Medium format cameras were in vogue at the start of Lisa's wedding photography career but could they make a comeback as refinements make them ever more compact and easy to use?

WAY BACK IN the year 2000, I shot my first wedding. At that point, I had been working as a music industry photographer for over 10 years but I'd had enough. I knew I wanted to get out of it but I didn't really know what I wanted to do instead. Then my agent at the time asked me to shoot her wedding. My initial reaction was, I might not know what genre I wanted to go into but I knew for a fact that it wasn't going to be weddings!

Back then, wedding photography was very staged and formal, and it wasn't considered as creative or illustrious as other streams. Photographers typically turned up at the ceremony, took posed shots of the register being signed, a cake being cut, group photos and very stiffly posed couple shots. Also, they typically shot on medium format, with Hasselblad being the brand of choice.

As I had turned her down, my agent asked me to help her find a wedding photographer and sent me brochures for the people in her area. This confirmed that, yes, they were all shooting this very orchestrated version of wedding photography. Before I could let her be subjected to sitting on the ground with her dress fanned out around her like a puddle or being framed in a white vignette, I agreed to shoot her wedding.

My only stipulation was that it had to be in my own way, shooting the narrative of her day with minimal posing and all shot on 35mm. About two hours in, I was hooked. I loved shooting her wedding and being allowed behind the scenes on the day. I found that many of my skills as a music photographer translated well. Both are high stress, one chance at the shot type of scenarios. I'd found my new genre.

Now, much as I would like to claim that I revolutionised the industry, it turned out that quite a few other photographers were moving to the more natural and unstaged version of wedding photography around the same time. It wasn't too long before SLRs became the norm and when digital came in, the DSLR was the wedding photographers' tool of choice. With the introduction of mirrorless systems, wedding photographers can now operate faster than ever, with rapid focus, speedy file writing and more compact camera systems. The result is more documentary and even less formality in weddings.

When Hasselblad recently got in touch and asked if I'd like some kit to take to weddings, yes I was excited and very flattered, but also I was a little sceptical about finding a place for them at weddings. I'm all about minimal fuss and minimal kit. However, I had also recently got my film Hasselblad out of the cupboard that it had been confined to for the last ten years. I bought some 120 film and had a little play with analogue. It's my belief that one of the worst things you can do as a creative is just stick with what you know. Playing and experimenting exercises your creative muscles and makes you a better photographer.

Perhaps I'm also feeling a little sentimental for something that I think we just don't get so much in photography now. The 'Happy Accidents'. You know the shots where you were not quite in control of everything but somehow something magical just seemed to have happened?

As the kit has become more intensely accurate and free education is readily available online, you really can become a very adept photographer with much less effort than before. Currently, the wedding photography market is supersaturated. Type Wedding Photographer UK into Google and you get over 75 million results. It does sometimes feel like that is how many people you are actually competing with.

## Standing Out

So, how can any of us stand out, how can we rise above this huge crowd? Well, I wonder if it's by shooting on medium format? Now I know what you're thinking, that you definitely don't want bigger cameras. But this is mirrorless medium format we're talking about here. The sensors might be huge but the unit around them has been purposefully kept minimal. I was surprised at how compact the Hasselblad kit actually was.

I trialled both the X1D II plus the 907X.

The 907X is touted as the world's smallest medium format camera, weighing in at just 206g. The lenses were also not as big as I was expecting either. I loved shooting on the 45mm for instance and it's surprisingly small. In fact, this particular combination was lighter than my Sony A7III with a 50mm. So, if the size is now not an issue with medium format, can we bring them back to weddings?

Let's talk about these two bodies in particular. They are both within the Hasselblad X family and are essentially the same camera built in two different ways. Over the weeks that they were mine, I shot both on location at weddings and in the studio. Out and about I preferred the way that the X1D II felt in my hands as it has a grip. In the studio, I preferred the 907X and shot mostly on a tripod.

If you come from shooting mirrorless or on a DSLR then the first thing you'll notice is they are slower to use. Slower to find focus and slower to register the files. Of course, this is because the files are much bigger. I found that the slowness enabled me to be more considerate of what I was shooting. I had more time to check my framing, think through my composition and add intention to the shots, so it actually improved my work.

Like those original medium format users that I was aware of at the beginning of my career, is shooting on Hasselblad potentially for the more formal parts of a wedding - the groups and portraits? I didn't want to fall into that trap and so I used the cameras over the course of a wedding day to push my own boundaries regarding what I thought they should do.

This did occasionally lead to errors. When I saw one bride doing something interesting, I grabbed a frame with the settings that the camera was on as I knew that moment could not be recreated. Sadly, it turned out to be about seven stops over and her white wedding dress was totally bleached out. Out of interest I still imported the file to Lightroom and could not believe that it could be recovered into a normal-looking image. There is so much information in the files, it's quite mind-blowing. On any other camera I've previously owned the file would have been a write off.

That could be incredible for wedding photographers, since we would have that additional superpower of being able to fix mistakes in post-production, even the really bad ones. The files are next level and that's really where you see where the money goes. You can zoom in and see so much rich detail and clarity. The straight-out-of-camera colours are gorgeous, I loved the skin tones, and the files needed very little doing to them before delivery.

*"The files are next level and that's really where you see where the money goes. You can zoom in and see so much rich detail and clarity. The straight-out-of-camera colours are gorgeous."*

Both the Hasselblads were extremely fun cameras to use. In the time we spent together, I became very fond and proud of them. Look at me with my Hasselblads! And this is one of the reasons why we should bring them back to weddings.

Think about this. When every Uncle Bob you meet at a wedding now has a decent camera and lens, imagine showing up with a Hasselblad – still the world's most iconic camera brand. Cameras from this brand have landed on the moon, so take that Uncle Bob!

PP

**More information about Lisa:**
- **photographyfarm.co.uk**
- **@devlinphotos**
- **@photographyfarm**

# Standing Together

The message is clear that everyone needs to do their bit to slow down climate change, and companies such as Nikon are taking a lead by focusing on their own green credentials.

Young Environmental Photographer of the Year - Inferno, Amaan Ali, 2021

Climate Action -The Last breath, Kevin Ochieng Onyango, 2021

IF THERE'S ONE thing that's resounding loud and clear from this week's COP26 Climate Conference it's that we're all in this together. There's no hiding place any more: if the planet continues to warm up at the present rate it's going to affect everyone, wherever in the world they live.

As with any problem, even a huge ongoing one such as that facing humankind right now, the answer inevitably starts with small steps, that eventually merge to become bigger ones and as the pace quickens this ultimately leads to a crescendo of action.

Individuals can play their part by looking at their own lifestyles, and likewise considerate corporations can show leadership through the way they conduct themselves. In this respect Nikon has been looking to set an example with its green initiatives, most recently as a major sponsor for the Environmental Photographer of the Year Awards, the results of which will be announced during COP26, with a selection of the shortlisted entries featured here.

"Nikon is proud to be sponsoring EPOTY, a one-of-a-kind showcase of inspirational imagery from around the world," says Julian Harvie, Head of Marketing for Nikon Northern Europe. "The unique way in which photography can tell stories with such impact is more and more powerful, and we are delighted to be a part of an award which seeks to change our perspective on the planet through those most important narratives."

Expect to hear a lot about Nikon-related activity this week as the company is also sponsoring 'Messy the COP Ness Monster,' as part of its UK-specific

Environments of the Future - Flood, Michele Lapini, 2020

Water and Security - Green barrier, Sandipani Chattopadhyay, 2021

partnership with WaterBear, a free interactive video and digital platform dedicated to supporting the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. An art installation placed in Grosvenor Square, London, Messy is a three-metre long, sculpture made from used jeans and sustainable materials, and is life sized proof that, unlike the Loch Ness Monster, there's nothing mythical about circular design or the environmental impact it will have if the fashion industry adopts it.

By getting behind such a visually dynamic event as EPOTY, one that's providing an international platform to raise awareness of environmental issues, Nikon is continuing its long-standing support for projects of this kind.

## Sustainable Progress

In recent times, for example, Nikon has revised its Long-Term Environmental Vision and Medium-Term environmental goals, with a resolve to accelerate counter measures to address climate change. This includes a commitment to not only reducing greenhouse gas emissions within its supply chain, but also helping reduce these emissions in all aspects of society through its businesses.

Local communities across Europe have also benefitted from Nikon's support, delivered through local country teams and projects. These have ranged from a German initiative to encourage teenage girls to consider occupations traditionally held by males through to a drive for blood donations in Russia, beach cleaning in The Netherlands, recycling projects in Hungary and raising money for healthcare charities in the UK and the Nordics.

Earlier this year Nikon also took the step to sign up for the global initiative RE100, which aims to source 100% renewable energy for electricity used in business activities. Nikon has set a new goal of switching electricity to purchase for Nikon Group's business activities to 100% renewable energy by FY 2050.

In its latest Sustainability Report Nikon also asserts its aspiration to grow its business while contributing to the sustainable development of society, and this commitment to look way beyond the self-focused ideal of expansion and profit at any cost is deep rooted in a company with a firm grasp of the bigger picture.

Nikon Z creator Harry Skeggs has donated this print to bolster fund raising efforts - it's valued at £15,000.

It's a philosophy that's filtered down to those who work for the company as well. Since the beginning of 2021 Nikon UK staff have been supporting and fundraising for the World Land Trust's (WLT) 'Buy an Acre' program. For every £100 donation the WLT purchases one acre of threatened habitat in various projects across the globe. The enthusiasm has spilled out into other areas of the business as well, with Nikon Z creator/ photographer Harry Skeggs donating a print to bolster fund raising.

"Recognising the importance of the WLT's work and the critical time in which we are living, we set out to save 100 acres of wildlife against habitat loss by 2022," says Julian. "We are pleased to say that the enthusiasm for an environmental charity has been huge, and we have already raised over £25,000 through various initiatives - equating to over 250 acres of habitat that's been saved so far!"

Words are cheap, but actions cost a lot more, and Nikon intends to continue to strive to not only be a major player in the photographic market but also one of the leaders in a practical push towards a greener way of doing business.

"In the hands of the world's greatest photographers, Nikon has been at the heart of many of the most important stories told over the last century," remarks Julian. "Our role has always been to empower photographers and videographers to seek out those moments and have the best possible chance of bringing them to life.

"Climate change and the protection of our environment are among the most significant stories of our time. Importantly, they are an incredibly important subject matter for the photographers and videographers we serve. And because they are important to them, they must be important to us, just as our success as a brand and company must be predicated on commitment to a sustainable future." PP

waterbear

**More Information:**

- **nikon.co.uk**
- **IG: @nikoneurope**
- **Facebook: @NikonUKNordic**
- **Twitter: @UKNikon**

# Stand Up for the Planet

**The state of the planet we all inhabit is in the spotlight right now and photographers can look to reduce their own carbon footprint and potentially benefit their businesses at the same time.** **WORDS** TERRY HOPE

Image © NASA

RIGHT NOW WE'RE in the middle of the COP26 Climate Summit and, quite rightly, the environment is centre stage across the entire globe and all the headlines are talking about green initiatives that are being discussed and agreed by world leaders to head off the catastrophe that so many learned scientists are warning will otherwise be on its way.

It's a story that involves us all and no-one can afford to look the other way and to imagine that it doesn't concern them. There will undoubtedly be a lot of changes coming along the line for all of us, some of which are going to be painful and will involve fundamentally changing working practices. Are you already ahead of the game and looking at ways that you can individually make a difference?

Already there are certain things that can be tackled, both on a personal front and in terms of how a business is run. You might be a small one or two-person operation, but you can still take a look at your own footprint; for example, the amount of travel you undertake, the waste you generate and even the partners you choose to work with.

That latter point is a crucial one, because if you, as a photographer, make the decision to be a little pickier about who receives your business going forward, then it makes sense that others will likewise look at you. So, although caring for the environment should aways come from the heart and never be driven just by a crude motivation to attract more business, there is actually also a solid commercial reason why environmental awareness makes sense.

## Making Changes

INCREASINGLY PROFESSIONAL photographers, like so many others in all kinds of varied industries, are looking at ways they can make adjustments to the way they work, and by subsequently sharing more widely what they're doing the hope is that it will encourage others to do the same. Some, such as wedding photographer Matt Badenoch, have made it an important talking point within their businesses, and it's all part of the ongoing conversation about how we can all start to make personal changes.

Prominent on Matt's website, alongside information on pricing and wedding albums, is a page on 'How to be an Eco-Friendly Wedding Photographer,' where the photographer outlines all of the things that can be done to make businesses such as his as green and eco-friendly as possible. It's not just a personal mission statement but it's been produced with other photographers in mind, with a view to sharing ways that they too could implement small but important differences to their working practices.

"Being eco-friendly is something that I've started talking more about as my own interest and priorities around dealing with climate change has increased," says Matt. "About four years ago I realised that I really needed to make some changes in my life. I'd always said I cared about the environment and was concerned about

**ABOVE:** Many photographers sourcing goods and services are looking these days to work with partners who share their eco values. Green Lens in north London, for example, brands itself as the UK's first environmentally sustainable photography studio.

**greenlenstudios.com**

climate change but action-wise, up to then I'd done disappointedly little. So I gave up meat, swapped my capsule coffee machine for a bean one and became more conscious about buying second hand and getting through less clothing.

"In addition to my personal life, I also had a look at what changes I could make in my business to make it more environmentally friendly. I found some helpful ideas online spread across different articles and forums, which I implemented into my working practices. I was, however, a little disappointed that it wasn't easier to find the solutions in one place, so I wrote that feature for wedding photographers who wanted to improve their green credentials. I found that a lot of them were excited about the idea of making their businesses greener, but just hadn't given it too much thought before."

For Matt there was a potentially thorny issue to address, since pre-pandemic he was taking on a number of destination weddings and his hope is that these will continue once international travel becomes easier to undertake again. Given that flying around the world is firmly on the list of things that people are being encouraged to do less of, it wasn't an easy conundrum for Matt to confront, but by looking closer for solutions he's managed to find a way to off-set the effects of his occasional foreign travel.

"In normal non-pandemic times, I typically photograph around six destination weddings a year," he says. "The impact these flights have on the environment is one of the first things I thought about when I started looking at making my wedding photography business more eco-friendly. Fortunately, I found there are a number of schemes out there for offsetting carbon. They provide you with a calculator where you input your flight departure and destination and what class you're flying and then you get a figure you need to pay to offset the amount of carbon your trip generates. This donation then goes towards activities such as planting trees and various renewable energy projects.

*"There are a number of schemes out there for offsetting carbon. They provide a calculator where you input your flight departure and destination and what class you're flying and then you get a figure you need to pay to offset the amount of carbon your trip generates."*

"I always send a copy of the receipt/certificate of the donation to my destination wedding clients, as an FYI. The response I often get to this email goes something like "That's so cool, we had no idea this kind of thing existed. We've just paid to offset our own flights for the wedding and have told our guests about it in case they want to do the same.' That's encouraging and it shows that people are glad that you've thought about it."

Other areas where Matt is trying to make a difference include things that ›

many other photographic businesses in any genre could look to do themselves.

- Matt dedicates an oak tree in his wedding couple's name to be planted in the National Forest for every new booking he takes. The process is easy to set up and the certificate supplied is then shared with the client, and the response is always amazing.
- Alongside offsetting carbon for flights Matt also makes a point to use public transport to get around wherever possible. He appreciates, however, that it's easier for him as a London-based photographer to do this rather than one who might be located in a rural area.
- Buying second-hand, particularly items such as lenses, light stands and office furniture. The second-hand market for cameras is also incredibly buoyant, safe and reliable right now with some excellent prices into the bargain, but Matt still buys items such as memory cards and batteries new.
- Working with suppliers who have green credentials over and above others that might not have the same values. Matt also makes a point to tell the supplier that this is why he's working with them, which feeds back that this approach is not just having an environmental impact but is also a financial incentive.

"The response from my clients for the initiatives I've undertaken has been surprisingly positive," says Matt. "I say surprisingly, as the target audience for my article on my green efforts was primarily other photographers. I wanted to make it super easier for others to implement what I'd done, and to find clients discovering my eco-friendly efforts was a happy bonus. Nearly all of them comment on how cool the tree gift idea is and a few have mentioned how impressed they are with my wider green efforts. Following this response, I do now make it a lot easier for my clients to see my green credentials.

"While I can't say for sure how much of a factor my eco-friendly efforts have been in my clients' ultimate decision to book me, at the very least it does appear to make them more excited to have me involved as their wedding photographer."

*"With the environment having such a big impact on my day-to-day work - and life - and the backdrop to many of my shoots, I started assessing my own practice as a photographer."*

## Spreading the Word

Cornwall-based Sarah Bowles is another wedding photographer who talks extensively on her website about the importance of caring for the environment, and she's using her position as someone who might have contact with couples planning their nuptials to talk about the sustainable options for getting married that are currently out there.

"I started to think more sustainably a few years ago," she says, "having moved my photography studio very near to the workshops of a well-known sustainable outdoor brand, and sea-based charity that's tackling plastic pollution on our coastlines. With the environment having such a big impact on my day-to-day work - and life - and the backdrop to many of

Tap here to find out more about Sarah Bowles' eco-friendly wedding photography.

my shoots, I started assessing my own practice as a photographer.

"It was not always a conscious decision to have a sustainable approach but something that I have slowly been improving, and it's becoming more important to me and the clients I'm now starting to engage with. People are also looking to book me because of my eco credentials. Couples opting to get married in Cornwall, with its hugely diverse and beautiful landscape, appreciate nature and want to do their best to protect it.

'All of this means that we're usually on the same page when it comes to wanting a wedding that blends effortlessly into the surroundings, and I can usually recommend a list of suppliers that reflect the same ethos, which makes it easier for them to arrange their day. Many of the component parts that make up a wedding, such as flowers, cakes, food and venues, can all be sourced locally.

"I will always accept a 'glamping' or 'festival wedding' in one location, over one that's set across several venues, which cuts down on transport for myself and guests. That also helps with the photographs, since it means the atmosphere hasn't been diluted by guests having to pile into cars mid-way through the day, ensuring the flow to coverage isn't disrupted and you get better photographs. It's more natural that way."

Like Matt, Sarah also makes a particular effort to work with local manufacturers and suppliers wherever possible, and she's also managed to source such things as albums from the likes of Folio that utilise vegan-friendly alternatives to leather, soy-based resin rather than formaldehyde and carbon-neutral delivery logistics. "I'm always refining my supplier list and looking for better approaches," she says. "I also choose camera bags that have been designed to grow old gracefully! A battle-scarred canvas bag is much better for the environment than a new nylon one."

Encouragingly, taking a greener approach doesn't necessarily mean that you'll need to make a huge financial investment, but it does involve stepping back and taking a fresh look at the things you're doing to see if you could change around your approach to make even small differences to the way you operate.

"The tree gift costs me £15 per wedding client," says Matt, "which is 0.7% of my average wedding sale. Offsetting carbon for flights works out at a little more expensive, but I've recently started to include this sum in my destination wedding prices so I'm not even paying for it anymore. And by making an effort to buy more of my gear and office items second hand, I'm actually saving money, so the changes I've made haven't been expensive."

"I don't feel that being more environmentally aware puts me at a disadvantage," says Sarah. "In fact, I think it's the exact opposite. For a wild cliff top wedding in the Cornish weather, you don't need a brand-new camera, you need the spirit of adventure and to be able to capture a couple's personality, especially in howling winds and pouring rain! That's the most important thing, not worrying about spoiling a brand spanking new camera, but to capture the moment. That's not to say that I don't ever work with brand new gear, but for infrequently-used equipment, I use, and highly recommend, finding local lenders, or hiring items. I've refined my equipment to exactly what I need over the years."

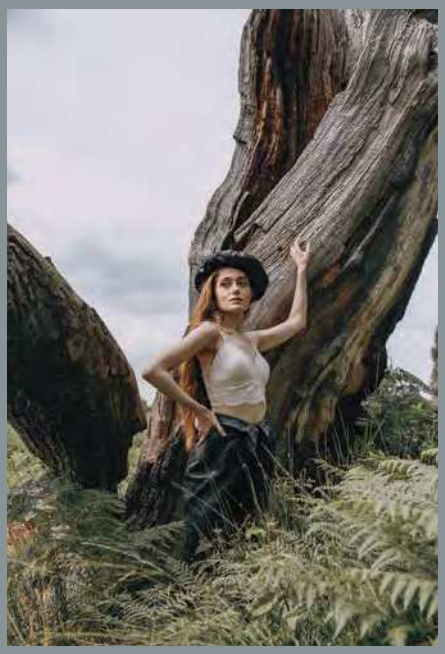
There's never been a more opportune time to look closer at the way you work and the advantages, both from a personal as well as at a business level, will usually massively outweigh the challenges. And when you do make changes then shout about them and make sure the world knows about it and hopefully it will be a movement that will spread! PP

**More information:**
- **mattbadenoch.com**
- **cornwallweddingphoto.co.uk**

## Shooting Sustainable Fashion

**JODIE MITCHELL SET OUT to become a fashion photographer but became disillusioned with the way that it was so disposable, but it's still an area that she loves to work in. This gave extra impetus to recent shoots that she undertook in Richmond Park and Canary Wharf with designer and stylist Nicole Amber Holstein, who creates her stylish original pieces using recycled clothes plus extras sourced from craft shops.**

**"Nicole assembled all of our outfits in-front of our very eyes," says Jodie. "Some parts were pre-made, such as plastic**



**netting with sequins that was upcycled and added to a red top, while a black beret was made from leftover fabric that the black skirt the model was wearing had been made from. All outfits were as environmentally-friendly as possible."**

**The shoot themselves were small and compact – just two models, Jodie, Nicole and a make-up artist on each - and yet what emerged was a set of impactful images of stunning fashion designs that was strong enough to warrant use in Feroce and Picton magazines.**

- **jodiedcmitchell.co.uk**

# SAVED FOR A SECOND CHANCE

**Through its innovative approach second-hand specialist MPB has made it easy to trade up unwanted photo kit, saving on waste and helping pro businesses to become more sustainable.**

THE MARKET FOR second-hand photographic gear has grown enormously over the past decade, thanks to the ease with which it's now possible to move on and upgrade kit that's no longer required. One of the prime movers behind this trend has been used specialist MPB, whose founder and CEO Matt Barker was exasperated by how complicated the selling and buying process was back in the day.

His vision in 2011 conceived a simplified model that would make life easier and safer for all concerned. Since that time the company has grown to become the leading player in a market that's presents photographers with the opportunity to acquire kit that, when new, would potentially have been out of their price range. Along the way it's also helping to put products back into circulation that would, at best, have languished at the back of a cupboard somewhere or could even have ended up adding to the unwanted mountain of electrical waste

piling up that requires recycling.

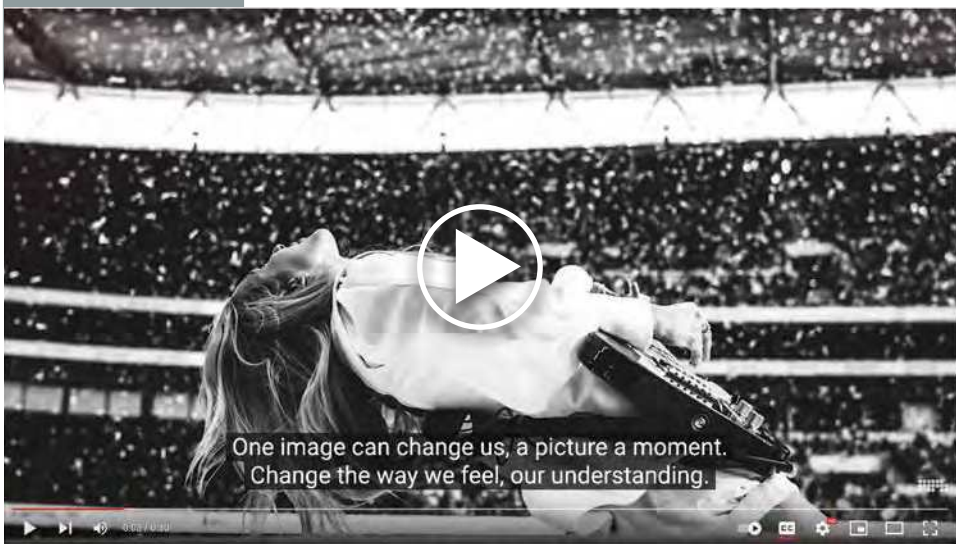
"I saw a gap in the market for a model where we could become an ecommerce player for second-hand photographic kit," says Matt. "After the first five years we'd reached a position where we were a leading platform on choice, price and service and had acquired a really good reputation in terms of keeping people happy whether they were buying or selling. From 2016 onwards we started getting investment into the business that internationalised it and it allowed us to build a lot of the tech we required to reach the scale where we're at now.

"The range of kit we can offer these days is formidable and it's all been photographed, described and checked individually. There's something for everyone in terms of value and choice: we've now got around 7000 different products that can be bought and sold using a smartphone, and we can price you right down to the last memory card, filter or battery. That's important because it makes it so much easier for people to sell the full range of products that they don't happen to be using any more."

## Back into Circulation

While the question of sustainability wasn't the primary focus of MPB when it was first set up Matt has always had an issue with unnecessary waste and the knowledge that gear was being given a new lease of life via the second-

VIDEO



*"We've just hired a head of sustainability who will be fully tasked with looking at every part of the business and they'll develop a ten-year plan that will enable us to become even more sustainable in the future"*

**MATT BARKER, MPB CEO AND FOUNDER**

hand route was personally satisfying. As we all start to become ever more environmentally aware, however, things have moved on and the whole issue of re-circulating used photographic equipment has now reached centre stage.

Around the world the realisation has dawned that it's simply not appropriate or necessary to upgrade to something that's brand new every two years or so and to simply dump kit that might still potentially have years of useful service ahead of it. Any business model that makes it easier and safer to trade up has got to be welcomed and MPB now finds itself at the forefront of a movement that sees individuals taking much more interest in their personal footprint and looking closer at the companies they choose to do business with.

"The last few years has seen people in general making conscious and explicit purchasing decisions about what they're buying and from whom," says Matt. "And that's not specific to photographic equipment but right across the board, everything from food to clothing. And that's been accelerated by the pandemic, which has made so many people realise that what we have is pretty precious and needs to be looked after.

"It's changed so many things. I wouldn't have said to you back in 2011 that the second-hand market for photographic kit could ever be bigger than the new market, but looking at it now I believe that this could actually happen at some stage in the future."

Matt relishes the fact that the photographic business, unlike so many other industries, is actually very

IMAGE: SADE FASANYA, MPB STAFF

backwards compatible. "You take lenses for example," he says. "If they're well looked after they can go on for years, and there are Canon and Nikon examples dating back to the 1980s that will still work perfectly well with the very latest cameras. And that means that these items don't have to go to waste, and that's something that's worth celebrating."

While buying and selling used kit might now have become such a key part of the thinking of many professional photographers who are looking to run more sustainable businesses, MPB itself is also taking on board the realisation that more could be done, and a green approach is fundamental to the thinking of the company. Following a review into the packaging being used, everything that's sent out is now plastic free, while the company is currently in the process of looking at its inbound waste and working out how it might be possible to reduce to zero the amount that's being sent to landfill by the end of next year.

"These are tough objectives," admits Matt. "We've just hired a very experienced head of sustainability who starts with us in December and it's going to be a very senior position in the company. They will be fully tasked with looking at every part of what we do as a business and they'll be putting together a ten-year plan that will enable us to become even more sustainable as we move forward.

"It's just so important, and I believe passionately that all business owners, from single-person operators through to big multinationals need to be thinking about this. It's about every single decision and managing sustainable growth, investment and even hiring decisions to increase diversity. We need to be thoughtful about what we do and look to build long term businesses that will be here for the future." PP

**More information:**
**mpb.com**

## TIME TO CHANGE

MPB has launched a global campaign, 'Change,' which includes the company's first-ever TV commercial. This focuses on the endless creative potential of used kit and, tapping into the fact that so many MPB staff are photographers themselves, it features a wealth of their images alongside others sourced from across the world. Click here to head through and take a look.

In Association with Nikon School

Time to TURN PRO

# Cherished Companions

Pets come in all shapes and sizes, from goldfish through to reptiles, rodents, pot-bellied pigs and the more traditional cats, dogs and horses. We love them all, so let's see your best shots!

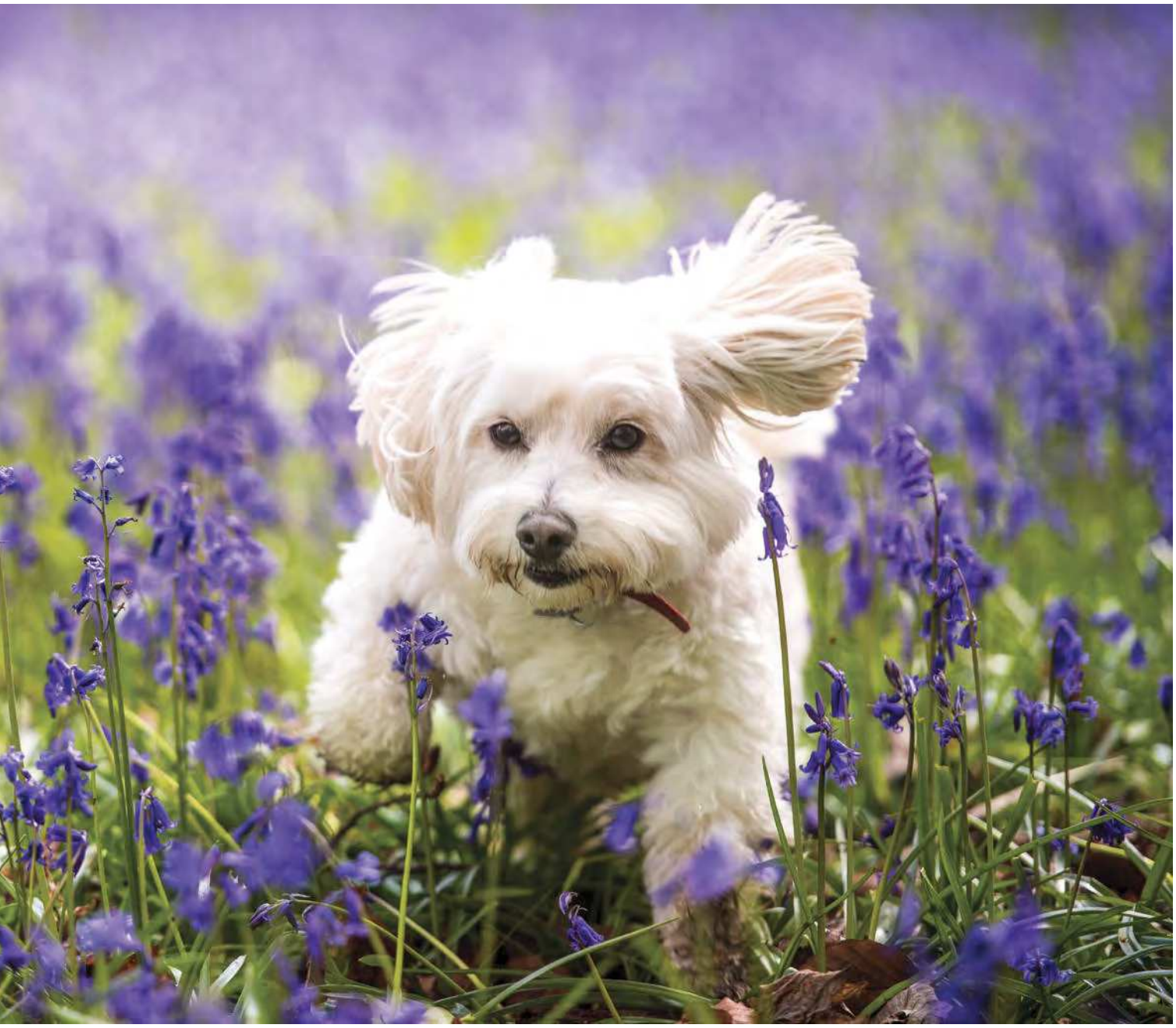
## ASSIGNMENT FIVE:

# PET PHOTOGRAPHY

WE LOVE THE animals that share our lives and, as part of the family, they're obvious subjects to turn the camera on. They're not always the easiest of subjects to photograph, however, since, a bit like children, they're full of life and don't tend to take direction too well and the chances are that you'll have to work around what they'll choose to give you.

Persevere, however, and you'll have a wonderful subject to work with that will reward you with pictures that you'll treasure. From a commercial point of view, for those that have the skills, such as this month's expert Yulia Titovet, there will also be a steady demand for high quality pet portraits as well, so it can be quite a lucrative genre to gravitate into.

There are as many ways to photograph pets as there are varieties of animals that



fill our lives. The smaller creatures, such as mice and hamsters, might call for a macro approach, and you'll need to devise ways to keep them still for a few vital seconds. Cats will inevitably do their own thing but there are lots of opportunities to capture characterful moments, while dogs will try to please you, but might not always be up to speed on what you want!

This is where understanding the individual character of the animal you're photographing will pay huge dividends, and the better you know them the more chance you'll have of shooting successful pictures. Take time to study their moods, have the camera set and ready for action and grab those special moments when they arrive. It's great practice if nothing else and will help you to hone your 'decisive moment' skills to a high level!

If you've been following this series you'll know the ground rules by now. We're running Pro Academy in tandem with the excellent Nikon School and overall we're setting a total of six testing challenges to see what you can do. You're cordially invited to enter just one or to go the whole hog and to take part in all six.

We're inviting you to send across your best single shot from the assignment to our expert team at Professional Photo and, if you've met the required standard, we'll send you back an e-certificate to prove the fact. Successfully complete all six assignments and you'll receive a further e-certificate to confirm that you really are an excellent all-round operator! It's not a competition, there are no prizes to be won but you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that your skills have been recognised and it's a chance to dip into some fresh genres.

**TAP TO ENTER YOUR IMAGE**

Tap to go directly to the Pro Academy page on the *Professional Photo* website and enter your image.

## How to Take Part

You don't need to be a professional photographer or a Nikon user to take part in Pro Academy, and don't be shy about sending in your shot even if you feel it's perhaps not up to the high standards of the work from Yulia that you can see here. It's also about learning and rest assured we will be making allowances for newbies!

Head to the Professional Photo website and upload your shot for Assignment Five – Pet Photography. Our team will assess your image and, if you've met the required standard, you'll be receiving your e-certificate directly from us.

# Challenge Five: Pet Photography

WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD to seeing your very best images of pets of all descriptions and, as always, the brief is deliciously open and you've got our permission to take whatever approach happens to appeal to you. So, you might choose to set up a formal pet portrait complete with backdrop and lighting or you could be looking for a more natural approach, where you shoot pictures of your chosen animal in a candid style, perhaps while they're relaxing after a long walk or in the middle of a boisterous game.

You'll see from this month's expert photographer Yulia Titovet's images that she doesn't have one single set approach and will adapt to suit the situation, even resorting to techniques that a sports photographer might be familiar with when she's looking to capture high-action shots of dogs performing at events such as agility trials. You'll know your pet's character and moods better than anyone and this will help you to anticipate the moments when something photogenic is likely to happen. Much of Yulia's success comes from her intimate knowledge of working with dogs and it's given her a valuable insight into her subject and allows her to set up photography sessions that are guaranteed to be fun and stress-free for everyone involved. The wonderfully natural and characterful pictures that result are exactly what her legion of clients will be looking for.

## Technical Tips with Neil Freeman

TIPS FROM THE TOP

IF YOU'RE PHOTOGRAPHING AN animal that has a very light or dark coat then if you're relying on automatic exposure, you could find that the meter will be trying to compensate and the result will be whites that don't look clean and a black coat that looks grey.

"We come across this quite a lot when the Nikon School runs dog photography classes in conjunction with the Kennel Club," says Neil. "The remedy is to either shoot in Manual or Aperture Priority in conjunction with exposure compensation. For light coats you would need to increase the exposure, for darker coats you need to stop down a little

"Depending on the amount of ambient lighting around, I would suggest starting with two-thirds of a stop to a full stop, and then checking to see if you're getting the result you want and adjust from there. You could also set your camera to bracket your exposures, so that you automatically get a selection of exposures each time you press the shutter."

The other main issue to be raised by delegates on courses is how to capture action shots and again Neil has some suggestions. "The first thing is to make sure you're setting a shutter speed high enough to freeze the motion of the animal and to ensure there's no camera shake," he says. "Then set the camera to AF-C, which adjusts focusing continuously to keep a subject in sharp focus. With the Z-Series cameras there is also now Animal Eye Detection AF on board, and this will lock on and track your subject through the frame."

# Yulia Titovets Pet Specialist

TIPS FROM THE TOP

Each month, we're featuring a top professional from the genre we're covering who will share some top tips and tell us what they find so compelling about their chosen speciality.

IT WOULD BE impossible to photograph dogs well if you didn't have a natural empathy with them and, for Yulia Titovets, they were an ideal subject. She loves being around them and has made it her mission to record beautiful pictures that are cherished by owners.

"At the moment I'm enjoying taking on outdoor shoots in stunning locations," she says, "incorporating dogs in landscapes, in the mountains or around water, always looking to get the best out of sunrise or sunset light. I also really enjoy agility photography, all the excitement of the event, the speed, the accuracy, the sheer joy that the dog and its handler share during their competition run or training."

While specialising in dog photography, Yulia is equally happy to work with horses, cats and other animals whenever the opportunity arises, and there are definite factors that cut across all aspects of pet photography. It's crucial to have some experience and understanding of the behaviour of the animal you're photographing and to get the best results out of a photo shoot you need to make sure that everyone is happy and calm, that stress levels are down to the

minimum and there is no pressure or other restrictive factors to worry about.

"Patience, and a lot of it, is really important," says Yulia. "Animals pick up on human emotions very easily and if the photographer and/or handler are stressed or rushing around it is highly unlikely you'll be able to get the shots you're after. Particularly when you're undertaking studio or commercial photo shoots, it's all about the balance. You need to give

your subject enough time to settle but not to get bored or tired. Usually if there is a professional handler involved the photographer's life is much easier."

Where dogs are concerned it's not always necessary to have the owner to hand, but it is an advantage to have basic dog training experience and good people skills too. And if a dog is shy in front of the camera or is scared of the equipment, you'll need to do your best to work around it, not stress out and force the situation.

"Give the dog time to settle," advises Yulia. "Move the equipment out of the way as much as you can and use treats or toys to make a dog comfortable. Unless owners know what they're doing and have experience of handling dogs during photo shoots they might not be able to help you that much. However, if you're covering shows, competitions or sports events, it's important to have the owner or handler involved and often they'll be wanting to be in front of the camera as well."

Capturing action is something Yulia has to master in the course of her work, and she considers that it's a similar challenge to photographing human sporting events. "Very few dog photographers actually do action, most just stick to studio or portraits on location," she says. "Even at the confirmation shows the photographer will often only do static and staged shots of winners, rather than cover the movement of dogs in the ring. I always loved a challenge and definitely prefer action shots to static, outdoor photo shoots to a studio, and whenever possible try to include movement in my photos."

For those looking to learn better dog and general pet photography skills, Yulia is a regular teacher at the Nikon School and she's currently looking forward to co-hosting more dog photography workshops next spring and is already planning her next on-location workshop, which will focus on gundog photography.

## Camera Gear

Over the past 18 months Yulia has moved over to Nikon Z Series cameras in the form of the Z 6 with an assortment of lenses. Most of her travel and day-to-day 'on the walk' photos are shot with a Nikkor Z 24-70mm f/4 S, while her work photos (sports/agility/shows) utilise a Nikkor Z 70-200mm f/2.8 VR S. For portrait/art style shots she might work with an AF-S Nikkor 85mm f/1.8 G with FTZ adaptor.

**fourlittlepaws.com**

## LEARN WITH THE NIKON SCHOOL

WITH MANY OF its courses now online, training via the Nikon School really is open to everyone, with a wide range of well-priced learning available to photographers at all levels and using any brand of equipment – although Nikon users will get particular value from the content. Head to the Nikon School website to take a look at what's on offer and to see what you could sign up for, with everything from lighting technique through to running a digital darkroom, mastering a particular piece of Nikon gear, filmmaking and even one-to-one tuition all available, along with location courses and experience days in the UK and overseas

**nikonschool.co.uk**

**TAP FOR EXTRA TIPS ▶**

Tap here for more tips from the Nikon School on how to photograph pets.

# Meet The Pro Team

## PROFESSIONAL PHOTO: Matty Graham

Matty is an accomplished all-round photographer and videographer, who's never been slow to take on a challenge. He'll be looking through all of the submissions and making the call regarding who will have earned that cherished e-certificate.

## NIKON SCHOOL: Training Manager Neil Freeman

Neil is one of the most highly respected trainers around, and each month he'll be handing out sound technical advice regarding how you might meet the particular challenge that's been set.

In Association with

Nikon School

# Editor's Choice

**We've been blown away by the number of submissions for our Pro Academy and the quality of work received. Here's a selection of some of the best.**

WHEN WE LAUNCHED our Pro Academy series in tandem with the Nikon School the idea was to set a series of challenges but also to take a look at the quality of work that readers of Professional Photo were capable of producing and, after four challenges, we have to say that we've been hugely impressed by what you've been sending in.

Many thanks to everyone who's shown us their work and please keep those submissions coming! We thought the very least we could do was to share some of the best images, and every single person here richly deserved their certificate. If you fancy picking one up yourself feel free to enter!

Time to TURN PRO

**ABOVE:** Blyth Harbour, Northumberland Early Morning by Richard Cook.

**LEFT:** The Early Bird, Christchurch, England by David Nash.

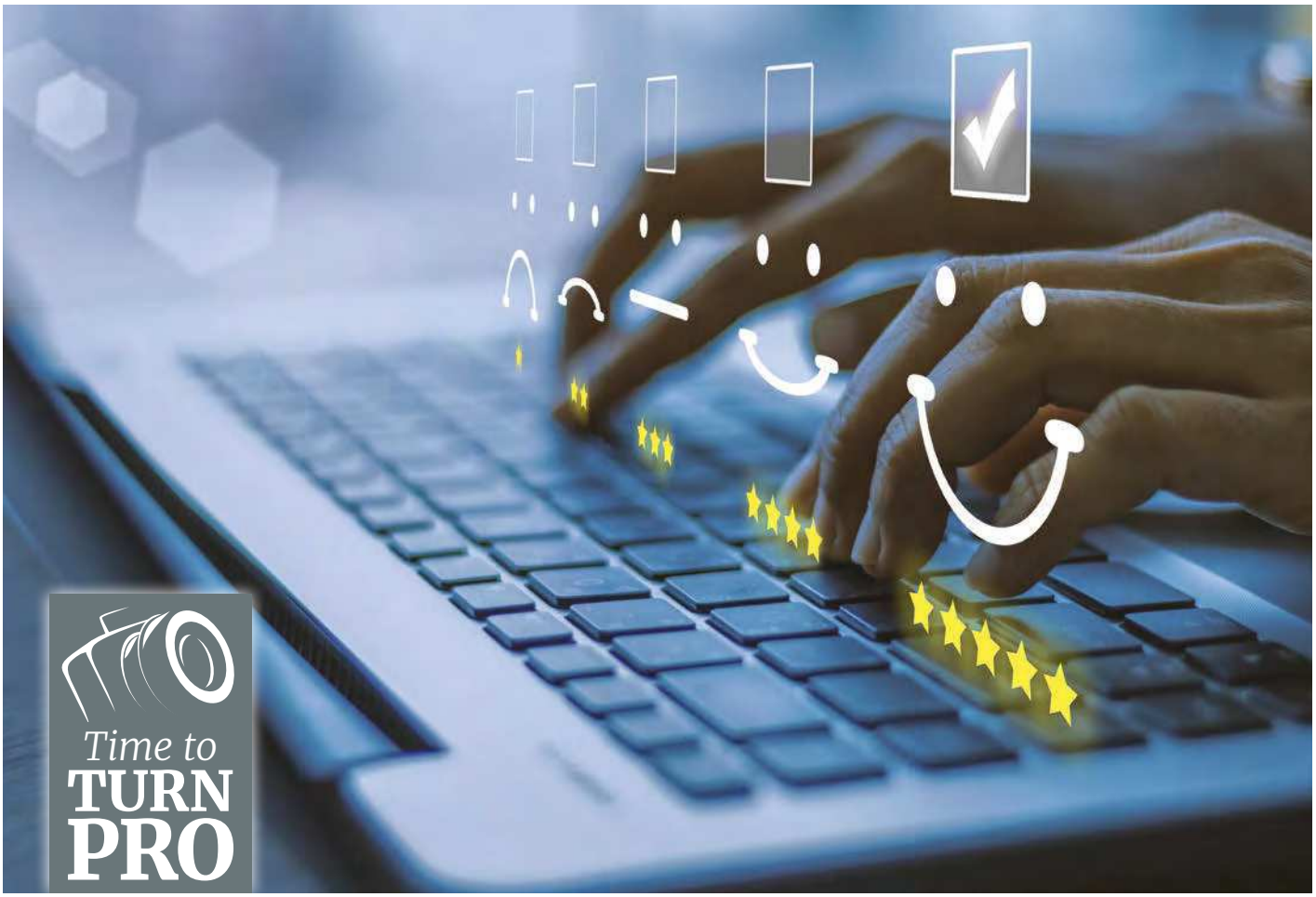
**BELOW:** Bug by Muhammad Arsalan Munawar.

**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:** Sunset And The Clouds, Dibrugarh, India by Arnab Sarna. Barbet Sitting On A Branch, Dibrugarh, India by Arnab Sarna. Flamborough Lighthouse, Rochdale by Richard Adams. Supply For The Winter, Brandbu, Norway by Bjørn Aalrust. Newburgh Seal Pup, Peterhead, Scotland by Rhian Wood.

*"Pro Academy is open to all, whatever level you're at and using any kit. Send your best work and, if it meets the standard, we'll send you an e-certificate"*

**THIS PAGE:** Clockwise from top left; Cresting The Ridge by Pete Rooney. Tayport Old Pile, Dunfermline, Scotland by Andrew Hamilton. Fawley Refinery At Dusk by Michael Butters. Highland Cows, Durham, Co Durham by Paul Hamblin.

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** Clockwise from top; Brandbu, Norway by Bjørn Aalrust. Ring Necked Dove, Fuerteventura by Richard Cook. Hello Mate, Glasgow, Scotland by Derek Dobbie. Happy To Pose, Coventry, UK by Peter Rooney. Moves In Time, Christchurch, England by David Nash.




# Focus on Feedback

Some of the most powerful marketing around is provided by impartial testimony on the quality of your business, and here's how to encourage happy customers to share their love. **WORDS** LUCY NEWSON

USED CORRECTLY, CLIENT testimonials and referrals are the formidable fuel that can sky rocket your business and, for this very reason, they should be an essential part of any marketing mix. You might think that they're complicated and time consuming to generate, but that doesn't need to be the case and, once you get into the swing of things, they should be generated naturally and efficiently following each job you undertake.

## Client Testimonials

These are statements made by an existing client who is sharing their experience and personal opinions of your business/service/product. These are important because we value the opinions of others before making our final decision. It's the psychological phenomenon known as 'social proof,' and testimonials are one of its strongest forms, building trust between the business and consumer. Starting from scratch, these are the steps I'd recommend:

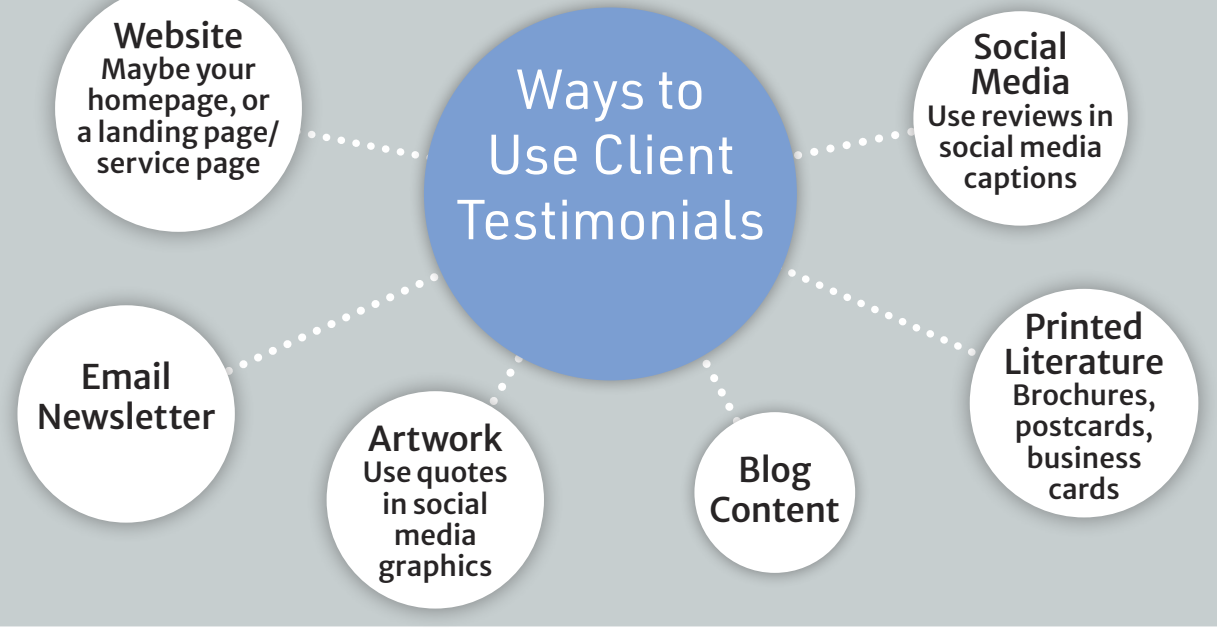
- Contact previous clients: drop your previous clients a call or an email to let them know you would love to share their experience with your network. Ask if they could spare a few minutes to write a testimonial and very few will say no.
- Asking every future client: add a new section to your workflow and, for every client going forward, once they've experienced your service, automatically ask if they will share a testimonial.
- Use email/social media interactions: any lovely emails you receive from your clients saying how much they loved working with you, or social media comments that praise your business, make great testimonials. Ask the client if you can use their words.
- The use of review features: reviews from the likes of Facebook and Google can be an amazing place to choose your favourite testimonials from. Don't forget, however, to reach out to the author to check they are happy for you to use their words.

With video marketing strategies growing strongly many would argue that video testimonials, where your clients speak to add their endorsement, are the way forward and I couldn't agree more. Showing a face alongside the testimonial adds to the authenticity.

All testimonials, positive and negative alike, are great for your business, because while the positives propel your business forward, the negatives will help to highlight where you need to improve. If you resolve the problems highlighted in the negative testimonial quickly

# Mind Map your Ideas

Once you start collecting testimonials you need to be sharing them with the world. The opportunities are endless, but here are a few thoughts to get you started...




your client may decide to change their testimonial to one that reflects a more positive opinion. If they don't then you'll need to make the decision as to whether you should include their comments in your literature, social media etc. Some would argue that, in the name of integrity they should be there, while others would suggest that, so long as the negative comment isn't too damaging, it will actually make your positive testimonials all the more believable.

There's no right or wrong answer, and I would advise that you decide on an individual basis what will work best for your business and act accordingly.

## Encouraging Referrals

A referral is quite different to a testimonial, and is the act of someone in your network directing others towards your business/product/service. However, it's an equally important piece of impartial feedback on your business coming, as it does, from someone, such as a friend or family member, that's already trusted.

Referrals can happen organically when your client is telling everyone they know about how much fun they had on your photoshoot, while you can also add encouragement by setting up a referral scheme. Both methods can work well, but it's the organic referrals that you want to be aiming for ideally, so make it part of your business plan to provide your client with an experience better than they could ever imagine: go above and beyond.

A referral scheme meanwhile is where you reward your clients for sharing your business with their network, and its aim should be to reward those that are already celebrating your business, rather than bribing people to talk positively about your business with the promise of a freebie somewhere down the line.

The reward doesn't have to be huge; it could just be a free print or discount off their next photoshoot. However, if you have a very strong relationship with your clients – which you should be constantly working towards of course – then your referral scheme can simply be the process of asking them to talk about your business without being offered a reward at all, and that will be praise from the heart.

Remember that social proofing via testimonials and referrals can give your business an incredible boost, so start actioning them now. PP

### DOS AND DON'TS

- **Don't** make up fake testimonials – this doesn't help your business, nor does it help clients to see if you are the perfect photographer for them. It can also be hugely risky and it will definitely undermine your credibility if you're found out.
- **Don't** force clients to recommend you, for example refuse to give a client their photographs until they leave a review. News travels fast, and your method could be quickly revealed, breaking the barrier of trust between you and your potential clients.
- **Do** acknowledge those who are helping to increase awareness of your business; drop them a message and maybe send them some flowers. Always say thank you.


## Lucy Newson

Lucy Newson LBIPP is an award-winning rural lifestyle photographer based in Essex, with private commissions across the UK. Capturing the everyday magic for those living in the countryside, she creates treasured family heirlooms in-waiting for her clients through her selection of albums and artwork.

- **lucynewsonphotography.co.uk**
- **info@lucynewsonphotography.co.uk**
- **@lucynewsonphotography**

# TIME TO TRADE UP!

Image: @bayreuther.w

Full frame models are an aspiration for many professionals who are looking to achieve top quality results, and trading up to a well specified used model is now highly affordable.

THE FOCUS OF the world at the moment is on the COP26 conference and the spotlight this is rightly throwing on environmental issues. We're going into more detail on the part that photographers can play in helping to reduce the impact of their own environmental footprint in our special feature this month, but one crucial way that individuals can make a serious difference is by looking to trade up the gear that they're working with where possible rather than always looking to work with the very latest cutting-edge kit.

There are, of course, always going to be technological advances that can make a real difference to the services you offer, but these days it's not always necessary to be the first out of the blocks in terms of adding the latest kit to your armoury. Go for gear that's still in great condition but maybe a year or two past its launch date, or perhaps the previous model to the one that's current, and you won't be that far off the curve. You'll also be saving money and, by joining the increasing number of pros looking to trade up, you'll be recycling your own used kit and finding it a good home.

Second hand specialists such as MPB have helped to change the entire landscape of selling and buying, and it's now straightforward, safe and profitable to sell on the things you don't need any more to raise the cash for fresh purchases or to trade up and to acquire what you're after via the second-hand route as well.

## THIS MONTH'S TRADE UP:

## Making the Move to Full Frame

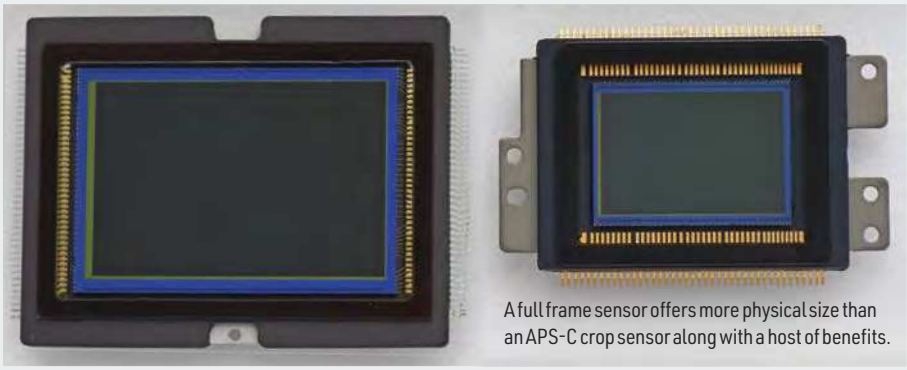
WHILE FULL FRAME has been with us for a long time – the Canon EOS-1Ds first arrived nearly twenty years ago now – back in those early days the cost of sensors was sky high and these were cameras that were out of the price range of all but the top end pros.

Since those early days, however, this part of the market has become way more affordable, while the arrival of full frame mirrorless models has also extended the range of options. By and large, however, a full frame camera will still carry a premium over a crop sensor model, and will still be seen as a more professional option, though it's important to realise that models with smaller sensors can still do an amazing job that's well up to the highest professional standards.

### MPB Full Frame Prices

- **Sony Alpha A7R III** price from £1719
- **Canon EOS 5D Mark IV** from £1559
- **Nikon Z 6** price from £959
- **Sigma fp** price from £1099

However, it stands to reason that the larger the sensor the better the quality of your end result, and there are other reasons why full frame can also benefit your photography. For a start, while it shouldn't really make a big difference to today's contemporary operator, there is still a certain satisfaction to be gained by working with a camera that has such a direct link to tradition by offering the same format as a frame of 35mm film, namely 36x24mm.



A full frame sensor offers more physical size than an APS-C crop sensor along with a host of benefits.

From a practical point of view this means that if you're working with older lenses – and the used market in optics is hugely buoyant right now since vintage glass never really ages – then the effective focal length stays exactly the same, and it's easy to work out what a lens will offer you. Crop sensor cameras use a smaller part of the field of view and so you'll extend the focal length: useful perhaps if you're a wildlife or sports photographer who could do with a longer telephoto, but it could create issues if you need an extreme wide-angle.

There are also other considerations to bear in mind, such as the effect of pixel density. If you were to take a full frame sensor and one that's, say, APS-C, and both were 24MP, then to fit all of the pixels on to a smaller surface area would require them to be smaller in size and squeezed closer together. The larger pixels on the full frame version would capture more light and deliver better quality images in high contrast or low light situations, and so there would be less noise and the ability to offer attractive shallow depth of field performance at wider apertures.

## What is Full Frame Perfect For?

- For those who still think of focal lengths in terms of 35mm film it's easy to know what each will provide and it makes it straightforward to work with older optics.
- A full frame sensor will be physically larger than a crop sensor, so pixels don't have to be squeezed in so much, meaning that there's better high ISO performance.

**"There is still a certain satisfaction to be gained by working with a camera that has such a direct link to tradition by offering the same format as a frame of 35mm film, namely 36x24mm."**

- Bigger sensors will also mean less depth of field, so if you're working with a bright lens and wide aperture you've got more chance of achieving beautiful bokeh when working close in.
- Full frame means focal lengths aren't cropped, and so wide angles remain wide, which can be really useful.

## Disadvantages of Full Frame

- Full frame cameras are likely to be bulkier than their crop sensor equivalents, although the issue is not so noticeable if you're working with a mirrorless model.
- If you're a wildlife or sports photographer looking to work with the longest focal lengths a crop sensor camera will naturally make telephotos lighter and more powerful.
- Even these days full frame cameras tend to be more expensive and are usually higher end models.

### *"Why I Love Full Frame..."*

*"For me the step up to full frame meant more light captured, more control over depth of field and lower high ISO noise and I also loved the increase in the size of viewfinder image that full frame brings over the crop sensor."*

**David Nash, Professional Photographer** ▮ **theelectriceye.co.uk**

# TRADING UP

**IT'S WORTH REMEMBERING that, when trading up from a crop sensor camera to one that's full frame, you'll also need to consider the optics that you're working with, since lenses designed for use with crop sensor cameras might well introduce vignetting if used in a full frame system. So, your budget will need to stretch not just to a replacement camera but possibly also some new glass, although vintage optics designed for film cameras could well do the job for you, even if you might need to use an adaptor.**

**Because you'll lose the crop factor it will mean that you have a wide choice of reasonably priced wide angle lenses, including some super-wide optics, but conversely you'll find yourself with reduced options on the telephoto end since longer lenses will now give you their defined focal length. You could always opt for a 1.5 or 2x extender if you're looking for a budget way to extend the range.**

**Look around and decide what's best for your requirements and then when you're trading in your used gear MPB will give you the option to buy exactly what you're after, all as part of the same transaction.**

## Potential Trade-Ins:

**(all Excellent Condition):**

- **Canon EOS 90D:** trade-in £665
- **Nikon D7500:** trade-in £540
- **Fujifilm X-T3:** trade-in £540
- **Canon EF-S 10-22mm f/3.5-4.5 USM:** trade in £98
- **Olympus M.Zuiko Digital ED 14-150mm f/4-5.6:** trade in £140
- **Sigma 18-35mm f/1.8 DC HSM Art (Nikon fit):** trade in £295

**The MPB website offers trade ins and you'll be able to input details of kit you have to sell and also add at that stage any gear you're looking to buy. You'll be able to work your way up to the cost of the kit you're looking to acquire, topping up the amount with cash or coming away with a surplus paid direct into your bank account.**

▮ **mpb.com**

**Introducing DMG DASH™ Pocket LED Kit —** the latest member of the MIX family. The handheld fixture features superior color rendering with the same 6-chip LED set as the MAXI, SL1 and MINI MIX.

- Fully accessorized kit with diffusers and eggcrate
- 4-fixture Quad Kit available
- Controlled via interface or myMIX® mobile app
- Wireless DMX by LumenRadio with CRMX and W-DMX coming soon

*"I love it. It's rugged, compact, soft, easily controllable from my phone, and speedy to deploy. All this makes DMG DASH an indispensable tool for film lighting."*

— Zac Nicholson, BSC
Cinematographer

ROSCO

www.dash.rosco.com

# Spotlight on Location Lighting

If you're a professional working on location it's reassuring to have a set of lights that are designed from the ground up to do the job. Here's a round-up of four exciting new launches.

**WORDS** TERRY HOPE

LIGHTING TECHNOLOGY has been coming on in leaps and bounds in recent years, largely due to the rapid evolution of LED technology, which has now become even more adaptable with the advent of RGB fixtures. These really have moved the entire market up a notch, ensuring that having to stick coloured filters over the front of lighting fixtures has very much become a thing of the past. However, flash is a long way from dead just yet and still has plenty to offer, and it's good to see that there is still some fine innovation going on here as well.

With a view to giving a steer to professionals who might be looking for some new, innovative and lightweight lighting kit to accompany them on upcoming location shoots we've gathered together four of the most exciting new lighting systems to hit the market over recent months, so take a look and see if there could be something here that's just begging to join your kit bag!

**SHOWCASE**

## Lowel Blender XL LED Light

**PRICE: £498** | TIFFEN.COM/BLENDERXL

On the back of the fixture dual rotary knobs allow cool and warm white light to be blended as desired.

THE BRAND-NEW Blender XL LED light from Lowel is touted as being one of the most versatile location lighting fixtures on the market. Modern surface mount bi-colour LEDs are utilised to produce a very high-quality light that truly packs a punch.

By using 45-degree angle optical lenses, the Blender XL puts out a versatile narrow flood beam that is four times brighter than a traditional 1x1 panel light but in a much smaller package. Meanwhile the included high-quality diffusion, which would usually be reserved for much larger studio lights, assures that light sources and colours blend seamlessly for an even, consistent output that can match any ambient scene.

On board is an array of surface-mount LEDs: 12 cool white/daylight and 12 warm white/tungsten, and these produce 98 CRI/99 TLCI output. Each LED has its own 45-degree angle optical lens, designed to achieve attractive light direction.

On the back of the fixture dual rotary knobs let users intuitively control the cool white (6000°K) and warm white (3000°K) channels to independently 'blend' desired colour temperature and full range dimming. Measured three-feet away at full strength, the Blender XL can output 3796 Lux/656 FC.

The light output by the Lowel Blender XL LED is four times brighter than a 1x1 panel.

For softer lighting with more spread, the Blender XL comes with a professional drop-in Diffuser. The resulting shadow-free illumination helps light sources and colours to blend seamlessly. In addition, a removable Clear LED Guard slides in front of the honeycomb of LEDs to add extra protection.

Flexible power choices enable this light to be used in any location. Included is a switching power supply with U.S. and EU cables plus a D-Tap power cable to operate anywhere using standard, high-capacity batteries for long run times.

Diverse mounting options make the Blender XL readily adaptable. Its industry-standard 5/8" receiver fits stands, arms and other set hardware. Meanwhile the included tilting stand mount offers an ergonomic locking knob for safe connection, while a locking accessory slot will readily accept accessories such as the Lowel Silver Umbrellas. What's more, the Belnder XL can shine as an adjustable on-camera light when seated in the included cold shoe adapter.

The Blender XL LED, which is available from selected UK retailers, weighs in at 9kg and measures just 13.65 x 10.8 x 7.9cm, and it ships with an XL Fixture, 5/8" Stand Mount with Tilt Pivot, Drop-in Diffuser, Clear LED guard, Switching Power Supply, US and EU Power cords and D-tap cable.

TESTED

# Rosco DMG DASH Quad Kit

**CVP PRICE: £1188** | DASH.ROSCO.COM

WE TESTED ONE of the individual Rosco DMG DASH Lights out in Issue 181 of Professional Photo and our reviewer, filmmaker Jim Marks, was hugely impressed on all levels. His verdict was that this was a fixture that represented a genuine breakthrough, that potentially could represent a tipping point for RGB LED technology.

The reason for such enthusiasm was obvious. DMG has a massive and long-standing reputation in the film world for the quality and integrity of its products, with its patented Mix technology featuring a proprietary blend of six LEDS: Red/Lime/Green/Blue/Amber and White. With these on-board, products within the MIX LED lighting range, such as the hugely popular Mini Mix, come with the ability to generate a huge gamut of colours alongside highly accurate Rosco gel matches.

Such high-end lighting technology was always going to come at a price, of course, but there was a growing clamour within the industry for this technology to be made more accessible, and the response from DMG was the remarkable DASH pocket LED kit. A technological and pint sized marvel measuring just 12.8x8x2.8cms, the DASH was still packed with all of the six chip MIX LED technology that could be found inside its larger siblings, and the price was set at around £250, making it a highly affordable option with an awesome set of specifications on board for the money.

Jim tested out the single light outfit but it was always intended that there would be a Quad Kit available, and this is what we've just had in to test out. Just as the name implies, this consists of four of the powerful pocket-sized DASH units, each capable of delivering up to 500 lumens of output, together with four beam-shaping accessory packs, consisting of a flat diffuser panel, dome diffuser, eggcrate and a gel holder for holding any Rosco gel or, alternatively, any chosen diffusion material. These accessories are magnetic,

The four DASH lights in the Quad outfit can work independently or can be mounted together to create a single powerful panel for ultimate versatility.

and so attaching and detaching them takes just a matter of seconds and they're nice and solid once in place.

In addition, supplied with the kit, which all comes neatly packed in a bespoke carrying case that's disarmingly small, there's a DMG DASH LINK. This is a metal plate with four tripod bushes to which all four of the lights can be attached, and this then creates what is effectively a panel that can be controlled as a single unit. This is where things become interesting, because for the very reasonable price of the kit you've got a highly versatile outfit that's suitable for any number of still photography or filmmaking scenarios with a collective set of features on board that represent a very high level of RGB performance.

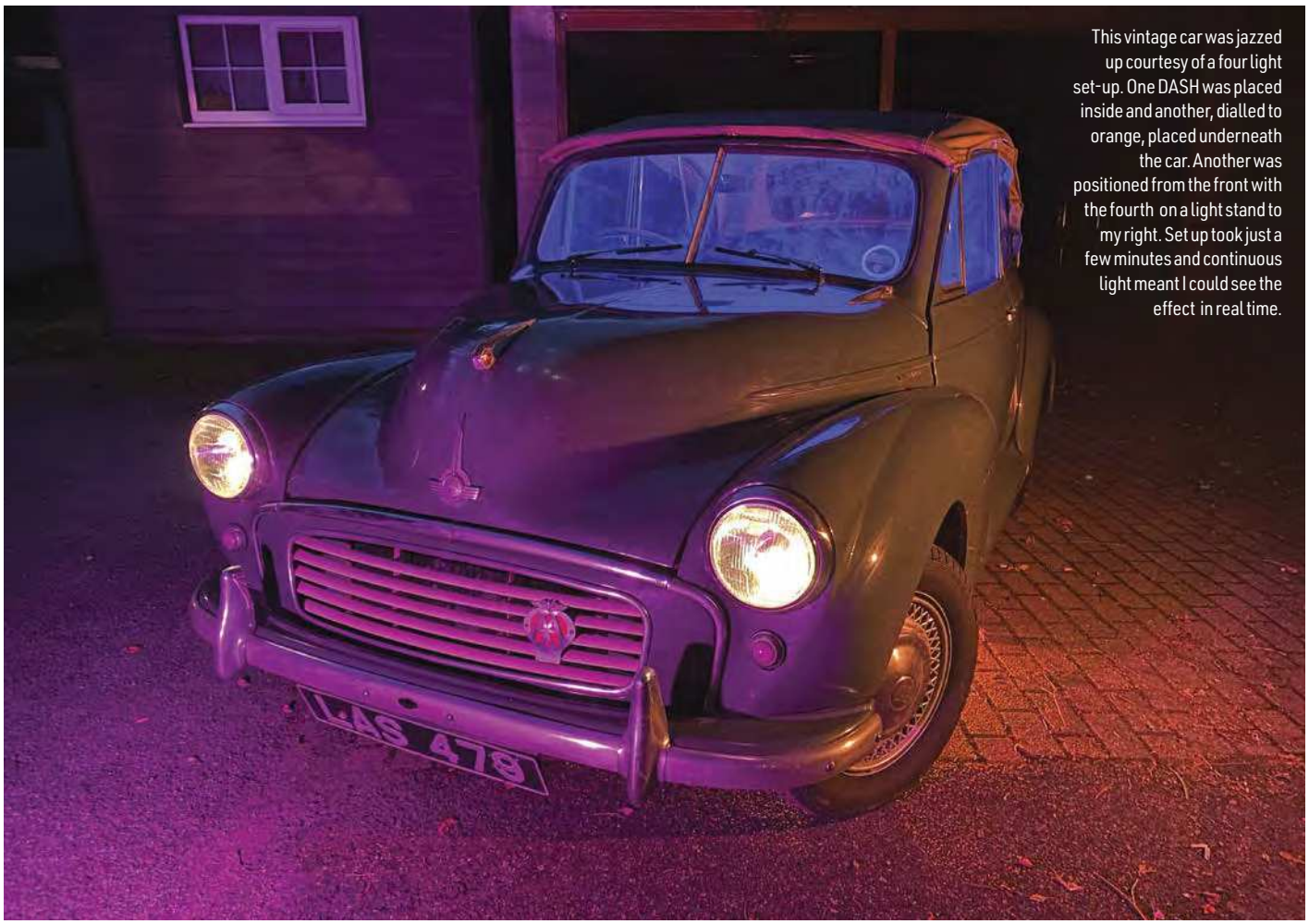
Furthermore, you have options to control the lights manually via a simple set of controls on the back - there's just three buttons plus a knurled knob on the side of the light that give you access to everything that's on board – or you can download the free myMIX mobile app and then control the lights via your smartphone.

## On Board Features

The very first thing to strike you when you take the lights out of their carrying case is the solid feel. The lights are wrapped in a sturdy all-weather aluminium casing, which doubles as a heat sink, and this makes them reassuringly heavy – 367g each - but not overweight. Rather they feel really well made and you would imagine that they would be well up to the rigours of a life on the road, which is the purpose for which they've been designed.

Each unit has standard 1/4in threaded

Tap here to watch Jim Marks' video review of the Rosco DMG DASH Single Fixture.



This vintage car was jazzed up courtesy of a four light set-up. One DASH was placed inside and another, dialled to orange, placed underneath the car. Another was positioned from the front with the fourth on a light stand to my right. Set up took just a few minutes and continuous light meant I could see the effect in real time.

holes on the rear panel and bottom and left sides, and so there are plenty of attaching points, which is good to see. It is worth pointing out though that, unlike some other multiple light outfits there are no lighting stands included in the kit and so you will need to carry these separately.

A long press of the on-switch powers the DASH up and the lights come with a number of modes – white, colour, gel, effects, source match and overall settings - and you can reach each of these through a press of the Lock button. The knurled red knob is depressed once to confirm a setting and it's all very straightforward to control.

In the white mode you can alter such things as the intensity, colour temperature and green/magenta tint separately, twisting the red control to go through the various levels or alternatively depressing it once to go through a selection of pre-determined steps. Head to the colour mode and you can control intensity, colour temperature, hue and saturation, while in Gel you can find a menu of standard Rosco gel colours, and have fun scrolling through or opt to set a specific gel that you might want to use, and you'll get an accurate representation to work with. Formidable tools in a unit of this size and price.

Talking of fun, you can also head to the FX setting to try out the special effects and here you'll find the usual array of such things as emergency vehicles, camera flashes, TV screens and flickering candles, and you can play around with the speed and intensity of the pulses for good measure.

## VERDICT

**I HAVE TO SAY that I thoroughly enjoyed using these lights while setting up a test shoot with a vintage car, and they were simple to handle, capable of being put in discreet places to throw a little fill in light where required and were infinitely adjustable. The ability to create pretty much any colour of light that you fancy, or even to precisely match a light source if required, is impressive and the lights themselves were easy to transport, had a long battery life and essentially did exactly the job I required of them.**

**This is technology really showing what it can do, and now RGB lights are here and are affordable it's excellent news for the professional photographer and filmmaker and a perfect solution for someone with a hybrid business. They might not be studio lights, capable of illuminating a large area, but they can do a brilliant job on location, and you also have the option of bolting them together to create a single powerful source that could well serve you as a main panel light when required.**

**Well worth a look and the Quad outfit I was testing is excellent value for money.**

Visit the

PROFESSIONAL PHOTO

website & online store at...

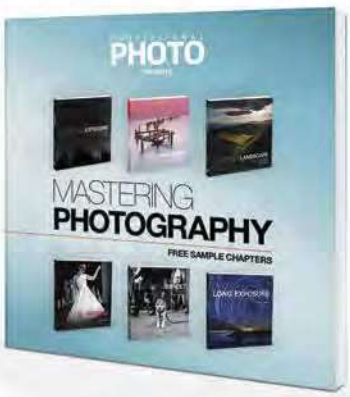
professionalphoto.online

- Industry News
- Exclusive Offers
- Competitions
- Free Content
- Subscriptions
- Subscriber Gift
- Print Editions
- Digital Editions
- Gift Cards
- Members login
- Online editions
- Back Issues

## New! Subscriber Gift

PROFESSIONAL PHOTO

Our 172-page 3D e-book is brought to you in association with Ammonite Press and is FREE to new and existing subscribers of Professional Photo.



## e-Gift Cards

One year, six month and three month gift subscription cards available now from the Pro Photo online shop.

Tap here to access an introductory film about the brand-new Elinchrom 1.

Tap here to watch a film that shows photographer Brenda Bazán capturing portraits of artisans in Oaxaca using the Elinchrom One.



SHOWCASE

# Elinchrom 1

**PRICE: £799** | THEFLASHCENTRE.COM

SMALL, POWERFUL AND perfectly formed is the message going out loud and clear about the freshly launched Elinchrom 1 off-camera flash. It's an interesting launch that Elinchrom suggests was deliberately designed to take the company out of its comfort zone, and it's designed to provide a viable and more adaptable alternative to a Speedlite. While featuring four times the power it's still similar in size to a 70-200mm lens and weighs in at just 1.5kg, making it the ideal location light.

One of the key features of the product, the company's first battery-powered monolight, is its light shaping capabilities. Designed around an unconcealed flash tube for optimal light spread, the One has been engineered to utilise the newly developed Elinchrom OCF modifier mount, making it natively compatible with most Profoto OCF light shapers. The included Elinchrom OCF to Bayonet Adaptor also enables quick mounting to speedrings and reflectors, using the traditional Elinchrom bayonet.

## Built-in Battery

Meanwhile the new light incorporates an internal Li-ion battery for maximum portability and enhanced protection from the elements while on location. While doing away with the requirement for proprietary spare batteries or chargers, the Elinchrom 1 can be charged up from a mains supply or even a laptop via a USB-C cable.

Powerful output and long battery life are stand out qualities of the new flash, and it's capable of producing 725 full-power flashes on a single charge. Additionally, with Active Charging, the One can be connected to a power source and in this mode it will continue to shoot while charging, regardless of the battery's power level, a feature that enables workflow to remain uninterrupted.

Engineered for peak efficiency, the Elinchrom ONE utilises its 131 Ws of capacity to generate a light output usually seen in 200+ Ws units. At one metre and ISO 100, the One can achieve f/11.9, with the Diffusion Dome attached and, when combined with the HP Reflector, the achievable f-Stop climbs to f/45.2.

With a touchscreen interface and a newly designed menu structure, Elinchrom has greatly streamlined the process of adjusting the One's settings, which is designed to ensure the most efficient user experience and quick set-up times.

Other headline features include a powerful bi-colour LED modelling lamp, a super-fast recycling time of 0.9 seconds at full power and a +/- 150K colour temperature over the entire power range. Synch speeds of up to 1/8000sec to freeze motion, overpower ambient light and darken backgrounds are possible using HSS, it's possible to switch quickly from TTL to Manual without losing exposure settings and the Elinchrom One will learn your shooting style and adapt its cooling cycle to suit. Finally, the two-way metal tilt-head with 7-8mm umbrella mount detaches, making the flash ergonomic for hand holding.

Available as a one or two-head kit and with a number of accessories such as a Diffusion Dome, OCF Adaptor, a powerbank for charging, carrying case and backpack, the Elinchrom One is one of the most dynamic new launches from the company in a while and we'll be looking to carry out a full test on the product in a future issue of Professional Photo.

The Elinchrom 1 comes with great light shaping capabilities thanks to its built-in compatibility.

**With Active Charging, the One can be connected to a power source and will continue to shoot while charging, regardless of the battery's power level, enabling workflow to remain uninterrupted.**

Controls on the Elinchrom 1 are simple and easy to access and the unit is capable of outputting four times the power of a Speedlite.

Pro Photo Store

PROFESSIONAL PHOTO

# Back Issues and Gift Cards

PROFESSIONAL PHOTO
SONY A7R MARK IV
CHASING THE BLUES AWAY
CATCHING UP WITH
LARA JADE
LOCAL HERO: BECOME THE GO-TO PHOTOGRAPHER IN YOUR COMMUNITY

PROFESSIONAL PHOTO
FREE
THE SONY A7S MK III
Life in Motion
WEDDINGS 2020 STYLE
BUILD A FINE ART FUTURE
A LOVE OF LANDSCAPES
NIKON'S Z5: DELIVERING PRO SPEC FOR A CONSUMER PRICE

PROFESSIONAL PHOTO
BEST OF THE B-CAMS
Natural Beauty
SIGN UP TO THE PRO COMMUNITY!
WEDDING FAIRS: ARE THEY WORTH THE EFFORT?

PROFESSIONAL PHOTO
FUJIFILM GFX 100S
LEARNING TO LIVE WITH AI
STAY AT HOME SHOOTING
Self Styled
HOW WAS IT FOR YOU?
DANIEL RECTA: HOW HIS PICTURES COULD SAVE THE PLANET

Visit the Professional Photo online store to securely buy Back Issues in digital and print formats.

https://professionalphoto.online

Tap here to access a live stream shoot with Jason Lanier using the new NEO 3 and AEOS 2 lights.

Tap here to access Rotolight's Kickstarter campaign, live until November 16.

Rotolight NEO 3 and AEOS 2

SHOWCASE

# Rotolight NEO 3 and AEOS 2

**FROM £352 AND £825 RESPECTIVELY, EARLY BIRD KICKSTARTER PRICES** | ROTOLIGHT.COM

ROTOLIGHT HAS ANNOUNCED the next generation of its hugely popular LED lighting products: the Rotolight NEO 3 and AEOS 2. The new products have been designed to combine the 'shoot what you see' benefits of continuous light, with what's said to be a world-first High-Speed Sync RGBWW flash, providing photographers and filmmakers with unlimited creative possibilities. These two ground-breaking fixtures are available now for pre-order exclusively through Rotolight's Kickstarter campaign, which runs until November 16.

## Rotolight NEO 3

The Rotolight NEO 3 is said to be the brightest on-camera LED light ever produced, providing unrivalled power and industry-first innovations in a compact form factor. The fixture is available as an individual light, a three-light kit and with a new, bespoke, high-performance, rechargeable lithium battery.

## Rotolight AEOS 2

Meanwhile, the Rotolight AEOS 2 is said to be the thinnest and lightest 1 x 1 panel ever made. Weighing under 1.4kg, it offers beautiful soft light on the move.

For the first time, both of Rotolight's new products will allow photographers to flash in any one of 16.7 million colours or 2,500 digital filters, while zero recycle time ensures you'll never miss a shot.

## KEY FEATRES

### NEW TOUCHSCREEN

Creatives can access key features and effortlessly recall favourite settings at a moment's notice thanks to a new full-colour two-inch touchscreen display that allows users to save precious time on any shoot thanks to its easy-to-use interface and powerful, feature-rich menu.

### ROTOLIGHT IOS & ANDROID APP

The all new Rotolight iOS and Android native app allows users to easily switch between lighting modes to remotely adjust colour, power, SFX and more. You can create custom groups on up to 20 lights simultaneously, direct from the palm of your hand.

### SMARTSOFT BOX

It's possible to effortlessly switch from a beautiful soft output to a harder light source at a moment's notice with what's claimed to be the world's first intelligent softbox designed for AEOS 2: *SmartSoft Box*. You can electronically adjust your light's diffusion, focus and spread without the need for gels via the touchscreen display or Rotolight app.

### ROTOLIGHT UNIVERSAL SPEEDRING ADAPTOR

A new Rotolight Universal Speedring adaptor unlocks a suite of Bowens-mount modifiers for the Rotolight NEO and AEOS range, making achieving soft light easier than ever.

Rotolight AEOS 2

Rotolight AEOS 2

# Atomos Ninja V+

The Atomos Ninja V monitor is already a highly regarded piece of kit for creatives, but the newly upgraded '+' version takes things a step further and adds 8K capability to the mix.

**WORDS & IMAGES** ADAM DUCKWORTH

IF YOU'VE NEVER worked with a large monitor on top of your camera, then give it a try and be prepared to be amazed. The gloriously bright and large image lets you see exactly what you're lining up or have just shot. It takes the guesswork out of composition and judging exposure, thanks to lots of on-screen tools and guides that far exceed even the biggest and best camera LCD screens or viewfinder.

Lots of professional photographers are starting to see the benefits of using an external screen, although obviously perhaps not for fast-paced sports or wedding work. But for commercial subjects in a studio when you don't want to tether up to a laptop, or for shooting static subjects on location, they're a great tool.

If you use your camera to shoot video, then that's where the real benefit of an external monitor comes in – especially those that have the capability to record the video signal. Many mirrorless cameras have time limits on recording or can overheat, and a large amount have the quality of their internal recording crippled. For example, the vast majority of Sony cameras only record an 8-bit 4:2:0 signal internally, while output it to a monitor/ recorder and the quality is upped to 4:2:2 for more accurate colours. Some cameras can externally output 10-bit 4:2:2 video for even more colour fidelity, or unlock faster frame rates.

And of course, for the absolute ultimate in quality, now there are more than 30

Outwardly the new '+' version of the Atomos Ninja V looks exactly the same but there's now a new processor and capability to handle 8K.

mirrorless cameras that can output the holy grail that is video RAW footage. This gives huge files but, if you pick the right monitor/ recorder, these can be saved as ProRes RAW which is compressed enough to allow editing on a reasonably modern computer.

The ProRes RAW format edits speedily within Final Cut Pro, and gives full adjustment of White Balance and ISO post capture to give you full control over your footage. The RAW revolution came to digital stills more than a decade ago, and video is only just catching up.

For the past four years, the Atomos Ninja V has been leading this change and it's the five-inch monitor/ recorder of choice for professional filmmakers everywhere.

Once you've used pro-style monitoring tools like waveforms, you'll never want to go back to flashing highlights or histograms. But many have also gone down the Atomos route for its ability to unlock 10-bit footage and 4K/60p 10-bit HDR video direct from your camera's sensor over HDMI onto an SSD drive. The footage can be stored as edit-ready ProRes in lots of different quality settings as well as ProRes RAW.

The Ninja V uses standard SSDs inside one of the supplied Atomos caddies or the smaller AtomX SSD mini drives. Then you simply download the footage to your computer and it's ready to edit. If you also record to your camera's internal memory card, you have an instant backup as well. Even in a different codec, if you like.

## Keeping Up

The standalone Ninja V can't, however, quite keep up with the very latest cameras, which can record in 8K and 4K/120. So the upgraded Atomos Ninja V+ has been launched, with the same body design apart from a new grey bezel. Inside is a faster processor, which allows for 8K/ 30p and 4K/ 120p ProRes RAW recording from a

## SPECIFICATIONS

### Atomos Ninja V+

**SCREEN:** 5.2-inch touchscreen, 1920x1080pixels, 1000 nits

**VIDEO FORMATS:** HDMI 8/10-bit 4:2:2, 8K Raw/ 30p, 4K Raw 120/60/30p, DCI 4K and 1080 120/ 60/50/30/25/24p, UHD 4K 60/50/30/25/24p, 1080i/ 720p 60/50. ProRes 422, HQ, LT, Raw, Raw HQ 8/10-bit 4:2:2 to 120p. H.265 10-bit 4:2:2 to 120p, 4:2:0 8/10-bit to 120p.

**MEMORY:** 2.5-inch SSD/ HDD

**AUDIO:** 12 channels 24-bit 98kHz

**CONNECTIONS:** Line/ mic in, 3.5mm headphone out, HDMI in/ out, remote, AtomX expansion port

**POWER:** NP-F battery or AC

**DIMENSION (WXHXD):** 151x91.5x31mm

**WEIGHT:** 360g

Working with a monitor such as the Atomos Ninja V+ gives both photographers and filmmakers a better view of what's going on.

select list of cameras. At the moment this is cinema cameras such as the Sony FX6 or FX9 plus Z-Cam E2 and E2-M4 for 4K/ 120p. To use it with the Sony cinema cameras you need to buy the Ninja V+ pro kit, which comes with the AtomX plug-in SDI module.

But crucially, for the Canon EOS R5, it records 8K/ 30p and bypasses this camera's famed overheating issues. It also allows EOS R5 mirrorless owners to record 8K and 5K ProRes RAW HQ for three hours to a 4TB SSD drive. The Canon's internal Canon RAW is very similar to the ProRes RAW recorded to the Atomos, but this is recorded to a large SSD with no time limits.

If you are the owner of a Sony, Panasonic, Nikon or other mirrorless Canon, at the moment you get the same results as with the normal Ninja V – a lot more colour information which is ideal if you are shooting Log footage. Chances are Atomos will slowly add more cameras to the list that can use the Ninja V+'s potential, such as the 8K Sony A1 which also shoots in 4K/ 120p – as does the Sony A7S III and FX3.

One of the issues is mounting it to your camera, which is far easier to do if you already have a small camera cage with lots of mounting points. The top and bottom of the Atomos has the Arri two-pin 3/8" accessory mounts, so you can use the right connector to stop the unit twisting.

The Atomos Ninja V+ can deliver a whole host of useful information, such as format, codec used, compression and camera output.

Suitable tilting and swivelling connectors are available inexpensively from lots of vendors. You then just plug in an HDMI cable from your camera to the Atomos and set the camera's HDMI settings to output a clean signal. The rear of the Atomos unit has a slot for a Sony NP-F battery and you can also power the unit up from the mains via the included adapter.

Once the Atomos boots up, the AtomOS operating system is easy to get to grips with. The touchscreen is responsive and tools include waveforms, false colour, vectorscope, focus peaking, instant zoom and HDR settings, as well as the ability to upload or use standard LUTs. This is important if you're shooting video Log.

The unit has an audio input, a 3.5mm headphone jack, a remote jack, plus full-size HDMI input and output sockets, so you can link it up to another monitor if you wish. The screen shows detailed images that really help you nail composition and see exactly what's going on with settings, too. The Ninja V+ records audio through the camera's HDMI signal or directly from a mic, and doesn't have mini XLR inputs but there's a standard 3.5mm input jack included, as you'd find on most cameras. The audio can be monitored via the headphone jack and is recorded in higher quality than on your camera. PP

**More information:**
**atomos.com**

## VERDICT

**THERE'S NO DOUBTING the new Ninja V + upgrade is a great piece of kit, but the issue right now is that it retails at £1500 while the older Ninja V is available discounted for around £630. And unless you own a Canon EOS R5, Sony FX6 or FX9 or a Z-Cam, then the pricier model doesn't offer you a lot extra for your cash at the moment. But it does mean you will have the latest and fastest tech when other cameras are added to the full compatibility list.**

PRO GEAR

# Built-in Future-proofing

Hybrid photographer/filmmaker Jim Marks works regularly with external monitors and the latest Atomos Ninja V+ is adding greatly to the considerable list of benefits already offered.

WORDS & IMAGES JIM MARKS

AS A PHOTOGRAPHER/filmmaker, when you opt to use an external recorder the first question has to be why? What extra production value is it going to be bringing to the job, and what are the challenges with integrating it into your camera build?

For me it begins with redundancy, having an extra high-quality copy safely on board and then the option of different codecs, whether it be DNX, ProRes or ProRes RAW being available immediately to the editor. The Ninja V+ also uniquely offers both H.265 compression for efficient back up or 4K 120 fps ProRes RAW for my Sony FX6 to maximise quality at the highest data rates, so already I can see this latest development having the potential to benefit my business.

Many of the cameras that we're all working with today are small hybrids or even nothing more than boxes, such as the recently launched Panasonic BS1H. Cameras like this need a larger screen just so that you can use them in an efficient way, and the Ninja V+ offers exactly that, combined with its faster processor and 8K capabilities.

However just mounting a monitor on top of your camera without due care can be a recipe for disaster. They must be balanced and in keeping with the flow of how you hold your set-up, whether tripod mounted, on an Easyrig and gimbal or handheld. You need to anticipate using the monitor above and below you, and design a mounting system that's flexible, quick to change and reliable. There's nothing worse than being hit around the head repeatedly by your monitor as the client asks you to move position for the fifteenth time.

On top of this it needs to utilise a fan that's quiet and a power supply that's comfortable to top up and doesn't interfere with your camera ergonomics. I tend to use a Hawkwoods dummy battery DTap connector that runs to a V Lock plate at the rear, or a Hawkwoods internal BPU battery with a built in DTap port. This provides

ample power and has the secondary benefit of removing the battery weight from the unit, which then enables the centre of gravity to be kept as low as possible.

I also work with a Bright Tangerine EVF mount to lock the FX6 monitor in position and hold it where I want to place it, with the option of a Zaguto loop for critical focus. By adding a long swat rail to the FX6 top handle, which you currently have to use to get in camera audio, I create a mounting option with a tiny Smallrig magic arm to hold the Ninja V+ in position.

I then use a 90-degree SDI port which clips onto the SDI unit and this allows me to run my cables back in a tidy fashion. Given the choice I'll always use SDI where possible as I much prefer the safety of a locking connection. By making these decisions I can keep the Ninja unit bolted in and ready inside my bag, removing the need to assemble anything whilst I'm on set.

The Ninja V+ monitor is set in PQ mode for viewing so I can have a rough idea of how the SLog 3 image will appear and the client won't get scared if they see a flat LOG image. I admire the clear red recording box that confirms it's receiving a signal and tend to run it in the minimalist viewing mode with its tiny waveform in the centre.

Another feature I appreciate is the SDI pass through, which allows me to sync a transmission device at the end of the loop in case I need to pass the image onto a director. When rigged in this way the Ninja V+ is a responsive and reliable partner that also effectively future proofs me for all the exciting 8K camera delights that are doubtless coming down the track! PP

**More information:**
**niceanarchy.com**

Jim's set up, with the Atomos Ninja V+ in position and being used in conjunction with the Sony FX6.

# MINITEST

GREAT NEW KIT HEADING YOUR WAY

## SmallRig Mini Matte Box

**PRICE: £91** | SMALLRIG.COM | **WORDS** ADAM DUCKWORTH

WHILE MANY STILLS camera lenses have decent petal-shaped lens hoods to stop flare, these are always a compromise – especially on zoom lenses. It's just impossible to build an effective lens hood that works at all settings, especially once you figure in the need for stills cameras to be used in horizontal and vertical shots.

That's one of the reasons why professional filmmakers always go for the larger and more adjustable matte box solution. These have moveable flags at the top – and sometimes at the bottom and sides, too. And they are set up to take the huge range of professional rectangular cinema-style filters that are available. You'll see in this month's Move Towards Motion feature that retail giants such as CVP take them very seriously indeed.

However, these matte boxes tend to suit large, manual-focus cine lenses and typically are priced to match these high-end kits. They are usually fitted to a base plate system that has 15mm rails for a follow-focus unit. This makes the camera kit bigger, more expensive and heavier. Not ideal for mirrorless or DSLR cameras.

However there have been a raft of smaller, lighter and more affordable matte boxes launched recently that are designed specifically for smaller cameras that largely use AF lenses instead of cine primes. We tested the SmallRig Mini Matte Box which is made out of light aluminium, plastic and carbon fibre, and costs just £91, making it one of the most affordable units around. Part of this is because, instead of fitting to rails, it screws into the filter thread.

The kit comes with a 95mm lens opening, so it will clamp around 95mm cine lenses if that's what you're using. It also comes with a kit of four adapter rings to fit 67mm, 72mm, 77mm and 82mm filter threads. These screw onto your lens, then the matte box is tightened down onto the adapter ring using a clamp. Optional rings that go as small as 52mm are available.

### SPECIFICATIONS

**MATERIAL:** Aluminium, plastic and carbon fibre

**FILTER FRAME:** 4x6.5in, 4mm thickness

**FILTER SIZE:** 95mm standard, adapter rings down to 52mm

**MAXIMUM LOAD:** 0.7kg/ 1.5lb

**DIMENSION (WXHXD):** 176x137x42.7mm

**WEIGHT:** 150g

These adapter rings also have the same size internal thread cut into the front, so you can still use screw-in filters. It means that if you're using a lens with a 72mm filter thread, the adapter will helpfully have a matching 72mm thread on the front.

But really matte boxes are made to be used with professional-style cine filters. The SmallRig kit comes with one 4x6.65in filter tray that takes up to 4mm thick professional filters. This filter tray slides onto the front of the matte box, and you can stack filters on top of each other if you buy additional frames. You can also use screw-in and cine-style filters together.

Fitting filters into the frame is easy, as there is a quick-release slider. And they slide, then clip in securely to the matte box so they don't get knocked off while in use, which is a useful feature

The single carbon fibre flag is attached to the top of the matte box and is both adjustable and removable. You just move it so that it's out of sight and get shooting.

On the bottom is a threaded hole with Arri-style location pins, so you could rig the matte box up to fit to rails, if you wanted. And the top of the matte box has four standard threaded mounting points to attach more accessories, but this is only to a maximum load of 0.7kg.

That's not a lot perhaps, but this is not a large and sturdy matte box costing a staggering amount of money but a light and simple system for smaller cameras. It keeps away flare and lets you use pro filters as well as screw-in, and looks professional. Overall it's a great buy. PP

### VERDICT

**FOR THE £91 ASKING price, this is an absolute bargain. It's a light and simple product designed for smaller cameras and, quite simply, it just works. It doesn't have the bells-and-whistles of much larger and more expensive matte boxes, but that's the point. It's designed for mirrorless and smaller cameras, works well and doesn't break the bank. SmallRig also offer a matching follow-focus system so you can turn your mirrorless camera into a mini cinema camera for not much money.**

# Shelly Mantovani

Shelly Mantovani has a whole heap of things to pass on to her younger self, so let's get started because there's a lot to get through and it's important to know what not to listen to.

STOP WITH LISTENING. That's it. People will tell you your work is too edgy, too dark, too niche. Don't listen. Some say it's not done that way. Again... don't listen.

Big rock star photographers will tell you to do it their way, industry bodies will tell you to get back in line. Ignore. Other photographers will tell you to buy more kit, that you really need to shoot on primes, shoot on zooms, that you're too cheap, too expensive. Sigh and stop listening.

They will tell you to take a stand at wedding fairs, others that you'll never get bookings through wedding fairs, that they get all their bookings through using Instagram. Don't listen. They will tell you they shoot 50 weddings a year, that they only shoot ten weddings a year at £10k each, that you should take only images that inspire you, that the client needs 34,560,683 group shots. Don't listen.

You'll be told your website needs to appeal to the masses, that it appeals too much to the masses, that you need to shoot from 6am to 4am, that destination weddings are the thing you need to be doing. Some will say you need to network with other photographers. Smile politely... walk away. You'll be told that to blog every single wedding, that you need to be on every single social channel in the world. Nod. Run away. Some will say you need to work more, or maybe need to work less. Just stop listening.

The only person you need to listen to is yourself. Trust your gut. Trust your instinct. Step outside the boundaries at all costs. Push yourself. Work 80 hours a week, or ten, whatever works for you at that moment in time. Remember to breathe when you're pressing the shutter. Do stuff that scares the shit out of you. Take pictures the client might not like, but you do. Make art at all times.

Be nice! This is really important. Be nice to wedding suppliers and videographers because they're humans too and have a job to do. Be especially nice to your clients and their families. And be really, *really* nice to yourself. Stay humble. The truth is that everyone is winging it, even the people you think are ace and on top of their game.

Say no... a lot. Say yes even more. Don't get comfortable. Embrace all the scary shit that will come your way. Some of it will be good, some will end in tears. All of it will help you build the business you have today.

Stop scrolling. Do not, whatever you do, end up joining endless Facebook groups filled with desperate photographers. And, btw, stop scrolling. Staring at other people's wedding images will not make you a better photographer. Shooting more will make you a better photographer.

Share the love. Seriously, give back to other people. Ignore that they might run off and use that tiny morsel of wisdom you dished out to take over the world. If they do, wish them well.

Learn to tie a double Windsor and a real bow tie immediately. These are skills you will undoubtedly use every single weekend. Remember to pack scissors. Buy comfortable shoes. And look after your ears. But most of all, **stop listening!** PP

*"The only person you need to listen to is yourself. Trust your gut. Trust your instinct. Step outside the boundaries at all costs. Push yourself."*

**Shelly Mantovani**
**Based in Yorkshire, Shelly cut her journalistic teeth in a newsroom and now tells stories with her camera. She's been a wedding photographer for nearly thirty years since a friend asked her to shoot her ceremony, she loves travelling to cover nuptials and was recently named as one of Professional Photo's Top 50 British Wedding Photographers.**

**toastofleeds.co.uk**

Photography and videography can change us.
They change the way we feel.
Our understanding.

They change our hearts and minds.
They change the rules.

Testing the limits of our comfort zones.
Changing the way others see the world.
See themselves.

Together let's change the way we do things.
Change the narrative.
Change the bigger picture.
Open up opportunity.
Give more people a voice.
Put camera kit in more hands.
Create a more sustainable future.
A future with more people included in it.
Here's to the stories to come.

MPB

mpb.com
Change gear.
Buy. Sell. Trade. Create.

★★★★★ ★Trustpilot
**Rated 'Excellent'** 4.9/5 based on 14,000+ reviews

# WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES THAT DISPLAY THE TIPA LOGO IS YOUR ASSURANCE OF THEIR OUTSTANDING **QUALITY, DESIGN AND PERFORMANCE**

**Every year since 1991** TIPA awards have been given to the best photo, video and imaging products. The TIPA logo is awarded by a large group of respected editors of technical magazines and websites from around the world including the Camera Journal Press Club of Japan.

**www.tipa.com**

www.facebook.com/Technical.Image.Press.Association/

twitter.com/TIPAAwards

www.instagram.com/tipa_world_awards/

30 YEARS OF TIPA